

This is the Day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ² saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

⁴ They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵ some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” ⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷ When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” ¹⁰ “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest!” **This is God’s Word.**

Dear Friends,

2000 years ago a special baby was born in a small village called Bethlehem. Shortly after his birth, wise men from the East came to worship him. When they got to Jerusalem they asked where they might find the King of the Jews (Mt. 2:1-2) and created quite a stir among King Herod and his royal court. Thirty Three years later, Jesus once again is called a king and it is creating quite a stir. As we consider this portion of scripture let’s take a look at, **“This Stirring Procession,”** and see that it was, **“For a Special King,”** and also, **“For a Special Purpose.”**

I. These verses tell us a lot about this special king. We see his divine omniscience as he tells his disciples, **“Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”**

Jesus knew exactly where this donkey would be and that the disciples would be confronted by the owners but our Savior-King’s instructions took care of everything.

These verses also show us our special king as the King of Creation. Mark records that this colt has never been ridden before and yet the disciples throw their cloaks over it and Jesus climbs aboard and rides it through a cheering and loud crowd. This humble beast of burden, even though it had never been ridden before, was not going to throw off the creator of the universe. Jesus – God’s Son – has complete control over his creation.

These verses also show us our special king as our Humble King. Scripture tells us, **“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”** (Mark 10:45). He did not ride into town on a white stallion but rather on a donkey – a beast of burden ridden by the poor. There were no royal robes or a bejeweled crown for him to wear, however later in the week he would receive a different kind of crown. He did not carry a royal scepter and had no palace. Some of his royal court were Galilean fishermen and a tax collector. Jesus was a special king because he was unlike any king the people had seen before.

The shouts of praise were prompted by his miracles. Some knew that he had raised Lazarus from the dead and others had heard him speak with authority. Then there was the prophecy from Zechariah, **“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”** (Zechariah 9:9). Jesus final journey to Jerusalem had to be in this manner to fulfill this prophecy, just as he had fulfilled so many other Messianic prophecies throughout his ministry. This special king was the promised Messiah. The one who would bring salvation to the people.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem as our special king, the people were stirred up. But many did not understand what was going on including his own disciples. Many of the people were visitors to the city and were caught up in the emotion of the moment, while others had followed him and seen the many miracles and healing he did as well as heard his message, and then there were the Pharisees. They, too, saw Jesus enter Jerusalem and they were disturbed by the amount of people cheering for Jesus. The Pharisees saw Jesus as a threat and decided that they would have to act to destroy him and his ministry and do it quickly. As we consider all these groups, they had their own thoughts about what Jesus was all about, but at this point in time I don't think any of them realized the special purpose of this trip to Jerusalem – most of them did not understand who he really was.

II. Paul in his letter to the Galatians wrote, **“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”** (Galatians 4:4-5). Now was the time for Jesus to redeem those under the Law and he would have to do that in Jerusalem and for this special purpose he was going to enter the city in a special way. The people knew something extraordinary was happening and so they spread their cloaks on the road as a special sign of respect. An outer garment meant a lot to these poor people and they were not easily replaced but they wanted to give honor and glory to Jesus. They not only lined the path in a special way but they also shouted out, **“Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” ¹⁰ “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest!”**

That word, “Hosanna,” in Hebrew meant, “save, we pray.” and in Greek it could also mean “to hail or give glory to someone.” With either meaning we can see how they were hailing Jesus as Savior and seeking his salvation. And yet they weren't quite sure what kind of salvation he was going to bring. John records how the disciples did not understand all this. (John 12:16). And Matthew tells us, **“When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”**

This stirring procession got the attention of the crowds in Jerusalem and yet they really did not know what the week was going to bring. Jesus came to establish his kingdom not by shedding the blood of his enemies but by shedding his own blood. His battlefield would be the cross and His enemy – the serpent; that ancient dragon; the devil. Many considered Jesus a prophet but if they paid attention to the coming week, they would see that he was more than a prophet.

Jesus knew what was at the end of this journey to Jerusalem – his suffering, his death, and his resurrection. It was not an easy journey but it was a necessary one with a special purpose – to redeem us – buy us back, as the Bible says: **“You are not your own, you were bought at a price.”** (1 Corinthians 6:19). The life you live right now, Jesus paid for it. He paid for its sins; he earned its blessings. That’s what it means to be a disciple, a follower, a Christian, a lamb, a sheep of the Good shepherd.

As Jesus entered Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday, many people joined the crowds in hailing him as the Son of David and shouting Hosanna! but really had no idea what was going on. Jesus was a part of their life only for the moment.

How about your life. Is Jesus a part of your life – ruling in your heart through his Word? Or are you just caught up in the moment – going through the motions. And then following a path away from our Lord because you don’t like everything the Bible tells you? Sometimes it just seems easier to listen to our friends or neighbors or follow our sinful nature. This might bring us joy for a short time but it doesn’t last and eventually our life is empty or loaded down with guilt.

Let’s not be ashamed of the Scriptures, and the simple answers of faith that come to us through God’s Word. Jesus teaches them to us. He knows where our journey through life will take us, and knew it ahead of time, before we ever walked the road. Even though at times we fall off the path, our Savior picks us up and assures us he has taken care of the damage – our sin is forgiven.

At the heart of Palm Sunday was a stirring procession. Our Savior rode on in majesty, and lowly pomp, as he went on to suffer and die for our sins. Today this special King, our Savior, rides into our hearts through His Word. This Word reminds us of the special purpose of this journey to Jerusalem – to redeem us who were lost so that we can become members of God’s kingdom – so that we can receive forgiveness for our sins, life and salvation.

Today is a joyous day and we want to lift our hands in praise and thanks for our Savior King. We understand what was happening and why he came to Jerusalem – he came for us and our salvation. May we rejoice in our Savior’s love for us that prompted his journey and his sacrifice so that he could save us. Amen.