

Palm Sunday  
April 9/10, 2022

God is our Savior. He has come to lead us in this world in order to fulfill the purpose for which we were created. Each of us has within us a longing that this world is unable to satisfy. We have good times and experience things in appreciation, but the truth is that often there is something more that we long for. Our Lord has come to satisfy our heart with the truth of the Gospel. The Gospel, given in love, calls us to become what He will make of us. It is in this truth that we will find our being.

But the tangible and real things of this world sometimes, and for some of us, often, get in the way. Jesus came as a teacher. Yes, we call ourselves disciples, which in Greek means those who learn, and Jesus teaches us. As Saint Paul teaches us, we are to put on Christ in order that we may become like Him. What does this mean but to emulate Him and practice what He teaches. We are to put on the mind of Christ. But more than this, we need to be lifted out of this age of confusion, death, and rebellion against the very reality in which we find ourselves and begin thinking as we were made to think.

Christ, who is in the very form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped. Pay attention to these words, for this is often the place where many of us can be tripped up. Like the people in Jesus day, we often focus upon our lives in this world. Not that this is always a bad thing, but we need to remember that we are those who have been redeemed in the promise of the Gospel, with one foot in each of the kingdoms. There is the kingdom of this world and the eternal kingdom of Christ our Savior. On this day, we remember the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. There is more here than at first meets the eye. We shall be made to be like Christ, but this does not mean we will be Him. There is a big cult out there that does believe they will become gods. No, it's not that, but there is this something more that God will put into everyone who believes and follows Jesus.

Many anticipated the coming of Jesus as king. But the kingdom many wanted was a kingdom of this world. As we have journeyed in this Lent season, we have been reminded by our teacher, our Lord and Savior Jesus that He is making all things new. He is making of us people like Himself who will dwell with Him forever. We begin in this world, but we are being prepared for the world to come. Think about the kingdoms, nations, and empires of this world. For some there are good years, but for many there is great toil with little in which to pleasure. The temptation is to think, "If we just had the right ruler, all would be well." There is no incidence in history to which we can point, but the longing for a good king is still there.

In Jesus' day, many were looking for one who would come to liberate them – not unlike Moses – take them back to a time when the people were able to freely worship the Lord. The only problem with this kind of thinking is that often the times being thought of were not as good as the rosy look back often seems. The Old Testament is rife with the constant battle against worshipping false idols and ignoring the Lord. Yes, Jesus has come to liberate us, but not to reestablish some past glory. He is pressing on toward the prize of bringing us to completion in Him. We may say that we see this in the story, knowing what is coming a few days after this, but we too can settle for a sometime savior who throws out the bad guys and lifts us up as one of the good guys. The Gospel is much more radical than this. He has come to make all who follow Him, good. Not only good, but good all the time. He must press on and finish the task He has begun. If we are to be complete, as He is complete, then we too must submit to our own journey toward the cross. Jesus told us to take up our cross and follow Him.

Things will happen just the way the Lord intends. As Jesus approached Jerusalem, He knew what was coming. He knew the details. It may slip past we who are familiar with this story, but look at the underlying events. Jesus tells His disciples to go and find a colt upon which no one has ever ridden. How would anyone (except perhaps the owner of the colt) know whether or not the colt had been ridden upon? He even instructs His disciples with the answer to give when confronted by the owner. Here is a point You and I can ponder. Jesus has given us His promise through our baptism. He has called for us to be His disciples. If the Lord comes to you and says He has need, will you oblige Him?

Each day we are given appointments by the Holy Spirit to live by faith and heed His call for obedience. It may be something simple or something complex, but in every case we are uniquely qualified to be the one to address the situation. That final part of the Great Commission is that part which happens each day in the life of one of Jesus' disciples. We need to learn to obey all that our Lord commands. It is not the selfish command of a tyrant. Jesus came serving us, even unto death. He calls for us to follow His example and be the servant of others. Often, the call to obey is to help another you otherwise might not help. Our Lord will lead us to go beyond ourselves and learn to love our neighbor as Jesus loves our neighbor. Through this we learn how to love the Lord more fully too.

The crowds were shouting and singing. They were happy with expectation. There were many hopes. We experience this with each baptism. But in the days of our lives lived, we know there are the tough times when each step can be a struggle. If we put on the mind of Christ, we can love our neighbor and have the same attitude as Jesus. He said, "I have done this for your sake." In serving another, we too can say, "I have done this for your sake." When we go outside of ourselves we begin to discover the true freedom we have in Christ. It is not freedom from circumstances, but freedom in knowing that all things are in our Lord's hands. He knows whether or not there is a colt upon which no one has ridden. In this, we are encouraged to live by faith, trusting the Lord above all things.

We begin each church year with the story that leads up to Christmas where the angels say to the Shepherds, "Peace on earth, good will to all." As Jesus came into Jerusalem for the assurance of our salvation, the crowds were shouting, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven." Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Our Savior, Jesus, who is God's salvation, sends us in His name to share His peace which transcends every time and place in this world.

Those who do not believe have to spend a whole lot of time and energy supporting their unbelief. Look around you and this thing we call creation is a miraculous thing. The uniqueness of each of the stones, some washed by rivers over years to be smooth and others with jagged edges cracked off larger stones by ice each speak of the marvelous artist of a creator. The colors and variations that abound all around us speak the truth of creation. As Jesus said, the very stones would cry out if He were to command us all to be silent. He did not command them, nor us to be silent, but just the opposite. We are to live lives that speak of the salvation which has humbly come to us in the One who has come and taken away our sin. He has called each of us to go on a journey with Him as He makes of us children of the Heavenly Father. Our God is the God of order, but He does not order us around. He has placed His order in us so that we may live in His peace and be His. Join the crowd in celebrating our Lord and Savior coming into our midst. See the passion of our Lord and rejoice. Amen.