



Sermon for Palm Sunday 2017

Jesus, the King of Israel, enters the Holy Place to be sacrificed!



Free Evangelical Lutheran
Synod in South Africa

St. John's Lutheran Parish
Shelly Beach



• The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Mt 21, 1-17:

- ^{ESV} ¹ Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Beth-phage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,
- ² saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me.
- ³ If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once."
- ⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,
- ⁵ "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"
- ⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them.
- ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them.
- ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.
- ⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"
- ¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?"
- ¹¹ And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."
- ¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.
- ¹³ He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."
- ¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.
- ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant,
- ¹⁶ and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, "' Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?"
- ¹⁷ And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.
- *Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and give us a new heart which will hear what You say*

and praise You for what You did for us by receiving Your gift to us and singing our praises to You.
Amen.

♥ Dear Beloved of the Father!

♥ As Jesus enters Jerusalem He takes control of what will happen. He immediately sends out two of His disciples to bring the female donkey with its colt to Jesus. On this colt nobody had sat before. And when anybody would ask them what this was all about, they should say to them, [3] *“The Lord needs them and he will send them at once.”* Everything is planned to the finest detail. What the Lord is doing here is no accident. This is not plan B which came-off because plan A did not work out, as some say these days. The Death of Jesus on the Cross is plan A of God. Jesus is the true king of the Jews, of the Israel of God, the only true king. He is the Son of David, fully legal, in the line of David, riding on a donkey, just like Solomon rode on the king Davids donkey as a sign that he was at that time the new king of Israel, not Adonijah [1Kings 1,38-44].

♥ Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt- He is the new king of Israel, not Herod! But, did the people of Israel get it? Matthew quotes the following, a combination of Isaiah 62,11 and Zechariah 9,9. Let us first hear Zechariah 9,9: *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; ...”* That is what Zechariah sounds like. Matthew combines this with Isaiah 62,11: *“Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.’”* Instead of *“rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion”*, Matthew uses Isaiah 62,11 *“Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold Your king is coming to you...’”*. It is very interesting to note that these two verses indeed speak of the same event: Jesus comes to the daughter of Zion, Israel. Matthew wants to reveal to us, that the people of Jerusalem did not get it, who it was that came to them. *“Say to the daughter of Zion...”*. The crowds were shouting the right words, *“Hosanna to the Son of David”* but when the people of Jerusalem asked, who is this, the crowd gave an answer that falls short, He is the prophet of Nazareth. So, we see what they were thinking of Jesus, that He was a prophet born in Nazareth who would become king who would reign from sea to sea and speak peace to all the nations [Zech 9,10]. At best they expected a united nations kind of leader, a political king who would reign, as Jewish king, over all other nations.

♥ They put their clothes underneath Him and in His path which was a sign of submission.

♥ But, they didn't get that Jesus was God's own Son! The crowds didn't have any idea

what Jesus came to do in Jerusalem, in truth. They never expected Him to be slaughtered on the Cross. They probably expected Him to try and drive the Romans off, to start a mega Jewish rebellion.

- But Jesus remained in control of the situation. He then went to the temple and cleansed the temple from all money-changers and animal buyers and sellers of the sacrifices. He emptied the temple of stone.
- However, then, those who never before were allowed to enter into the temple came to Him that day, namely the lame and the blind. They were always considered to be unclean. Jesus allowed them into the temple and He healed them right there in the temple! This was highly controversial in the eyes of the chief priests and scribes.
- And the children who were shouting in the temple, "*Hosanna to the Son of David*" especially outraged the members of the Jewish temple council. What were they doing in the temple in the first place and listen to what they were saying!!
- Jesus confirmed what these little ones were saying. You see, they are the poor in the Spirit. He assigned to *them* that they were fulfilling Psalm 8,3: "*Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise*". And in case one wonders if *they really got it* we have to remember what Matthew recorded in chapter 11, 25-26 what Jesus was saying after He had done miracles: "*I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.*" In other words, they got it. They gave the right praise to Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem. They sort of represented all of us that day so that our King got His rightful praise as He was riding into Jerusalem as our King.
- Blessed are the poor in the Spirit is the heading of Jesus' sermon on the mount. We see how this plays itself out throughout Jesus' ministry. There is the new temple, Jesus, gathered in the cleansed old temple of stone with the ones who praise Him by receiving His gifts and assigning the prophecies of the OT onto Jesus, He is the Son of David.
- But the rest of Jerusalem would increase in hostility towards Him. Why? This is an important point to realise in our times: Because the Son of David did not fulfill *their* political dreams. There must have been quite some anticipation that here comes the prophet who is going to sort out this world once and for all, now. God is going to finally sort out the world on the Last Day, which is not necessarily now. That was not the right time. Jesus did not enter Jerusalem to accomplish a political solution. He did not conquer the Romans to relief the Jews from being oppressed. Jesus cannot be

manipulated to play a political role. He is the King of the ultimately new Kingdom, which is not from this world. His Kingdom is a new creation, a new Kingdom, which does not engage in fighting with the political kingdoms of the world, until the Last Day.

• Instead, when the politics of the day captured Jesus and did with Him what they wanted, even crucifying Him in the end, He did not resist, but suffered in silence. He is the King of Israel and at the same time He is the suffering servant of Israel. "Your king is coming to you, HUMBLE". That is what humble means, prepared to be the Least for the worst sinner. The Lord who blesses the poor in Spirit. Without any sign of earthly might!

• Only the blind, the lame, the little children and His twelve disciples were with Him in the temple. That was His following, at that stage. And it would diminish into none. On the Cross He was alone. He was the King of Israel and He alone was Israel of God. He alone trusted the Father that this was plan A! This was it. [Isaiah 62,11] "*Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your salvation comes; behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense (toil or suffering) before Him."*

• And for us, in Baptism we have been baptised into His baptismal ministry to fulfill all righteousness. We have been baptised into His suffering and Death. He took our place. He suffered on our behalf to be our King. He is a king as a real king should be, serving His children, blessing the poor in Spirit with the most wonderful gifts. He comforts you when you suffer and mourn. He satisfies you with His righteousness. He makes you humble and meek. He makes you merciful, even towards your enemies. He gives you a clean heart to see God. He gives His peace into your heart so that you may become a peacemaker, in the sense of speaking and bringing the peace of God into the world where hatred is in the order of the day.

• And He gives you His joy and gladness into your heart when you are persecuted and accused of all kinds of evil because you confess that Jesus is the Saviour of the world and nobody else.

• Jesus gives us His Spirit, who drives out all fear for our circumstances, for our government, for people and things and powers, demons, any evil, and death.

• Jesus is the King who is in control of the whole universe. He is the King who serves us, who blesses the poor in the Spirit. He is the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world. Thank you dearest Jesus. **Amen.**

• *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.** [Phil 4,7].*