



Free Evangelical  
Lutheran Synod  
in South Africa

## Sermon for the First of Advent (Proper B) 2017

*Jesus comes!*



St. John's Lutheran Parish  
Shelly Beach

### • The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Mk 11, 1-10:

- <sup>ESV</sup> 1 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples
- 2 and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it.
- 3 If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'"
- 4 And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it.
- 5 And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?"
- 6 And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go.
- 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it.
- 8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields.
- 9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "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!"
- 11 And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

• ***Let us pray:*** *Come Holy Spirit, open our ears, enlighten our minds and make us true inhabitants of the Kingdom of the Father. Amen.*

### • **Dear Daughter of Zion!**

• In His church we order our time according to Christ's coming into the world and His ministry to all people. It is so central to all of human history and life in this universe. Christ, His person, word and work is the One who literally holds the whole universe together. The time of Advent marks the beginning of another church year in which we want to grow deeper into Christ, into becoming more dependant on Christ and His

sacrifice for us. Independence is the wrong direction. As we grow by God's Word we realise more and more how dependant we are of Him. The Word of God wants to knit us, Christ's Body, even closer together with Christ the Head and with one another.

✦ It is a good time to draw together as families to foster warm family life and love, to sit around the coffee table and have your Christmas cookies. But, warmth so often evades us, because what we need first of all is warm family ties with our heavenly Father and heavenly brother Christ.

✦ That is why God comes to intertwine the story of my life, the narrative of my existence, with His story and with the story of others around me. In Christ, its never everyone for him or herself. My story should become so much part of Christ's story that on the Last Day, the Day of Fulfilment my whole being in spirit and body will be fully incorporated in Him and His body.

✦ This is where the sermon word for today comes in. We notice, Jesus comes to Jerusalem, to His town- He is the Son of David, the king of God's Israel who will be king forever, but Jerusalem is not ready to receive her King. They didn't realise what was going on. Jesus' whole following, who gave the right praise that day, came from Galilee- even the donkey was taken from a village outside of Jerusalem.

✦ Jerusalem is indifferent, doesn't care, shrugs its shoulder, but it won't take long before indifference will turn into hostility.

✦ They should have known, they could have known that riding on a donkey's colt means: here comes David's Son the anointed One of God. That is what Solomon did as a sign that David had anointed him. But, for the inhabitants of Jerusalem it was life as normal. They were blind for what God was doing in their very midst, once and for all.

✦ Ironically though, they themselves would eventually participate in the drama. Life would never be the same anymore. Jerusalem was not saved from the Romans, later on in 70 AD, but bitterly destroyed by the Romans through God's providence. So much so, that the temple could never be used again since that great catastrophe.

✦ This is a warning on the one hand to all people: If Jesus comes, you better pay attention. You cannot simply remain indifferent, continue as usual. When Jesus comes to you, there will be a change in your life, either now or later, either wonderful or

devastating. 'That sounds cruel', I hear some saying.

♣We have to see what is at stake! Then we will understand what Jesus was doing, not only for us, but especially for Jerusalem's sake!

♣But first of all we have to remember who Jesus is! Jesus is the Son of David and Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. This is what the people of Jerusalem didn't get. They ignored God riding into their midst. The temple belongs to Jesus. It was built for Him. It is His design in the first place! Its crazy if you think about it this way: The very person they built it for comes as person into their midst and they ignore Him!! They didn't recognise God in Jesus.

♣That is where one wants to join in shouting with the prophet Isaiah [Is 61,4]: That God *"would rend the heavens and come down"*! Do you know that thought, O God, come down and give these guys a real shake-up. Make them run in fear! That will teach them! Then they will know its You. And then they will listen to You.

♣Well, anyone who speaks like this, does not know the OT story. How many times was Israel not scared to death because God did act in their midst? This goes for the pagan antions also. Take Egypt. Their Pharao went through all those plagues and in the end he still chased after God's people in the Red Sea which got them all killed. Was that cruel of God? Who is cruel in this equation?

♣And now, the prophet Isaiah's call and sigh is fulfilled- here the heavens are ripped open, the baptised Son of David enters the gates of Jerusalem- God is coming down.

♣But, not as we old Adams would have expected! Not to make war against any person, not against the people of Jerusalem, not against the Romans. To be sure, Jesus came to make war on death, on death as our only certain future! Jesus came to make war on our blindness. He wouldn't leave us in our old Adam's status quo, comfortable, but heading for disaster.

♣What do you do, if people, deceived by death's leader, ignore the offer of Life to instead carry on as usual. Its like with addicts, our old Adam has become so addicted to and almost become comfortable with death as final option at the end of this life here on earth. What this does is, well if I am going to die in any case, this life better be it! And so everything is thrusted in making this the best life there is. So we rush off not to miss

out on anything.

• But, then things come up, things like sickness, maybe a special needs child, accident, loose my job, a war breaks out, many things can go wrong. In other words, what if something in my life suddenly keeps me from having that cool and exiting or simply peaceful and quiet life, whatever my dearest wish may be for this life? Then all seems lost and fatigue or despair may easily set in.

• That is why Jesus came to Jerusalem that day. That is why Jesus came into our life, most of us when we were baptised, that is why He keeps coming to us, also today on this First of Advent, to proclaim to us, do you hear what they shouted that day? [9-10] *"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"*

• What does this proclaim? Doesn't it say, dear children of God, this life even as Christians still suffering in the church militant, still battling in the struggling church, is not it, this is not your best life, this is a practice run, this is the time set aside to on the one hand deal with sin, properly, and on the other hand to extend the mercy we have received to others!

• Therefore, don't worry, if things go terribly wrong in your eyes, you are not missing out on anything substantial! Its deception which tells us that we do loose out, if we don't chase around trying to tick all the boxes.

• Jesus has come, He comes to us today, He will make His final return. We can look forward for the best still to come, the coming kingdom of our Father David. Jesus comes today to us and says, take one step back, listen, see, what's really going on. Jesus is at work in the world, in the church in your and my life. The most important thing is, not to loose out on what He gives. His gifts are real treasures, which we can use very effectively in the here and now. Forgive those, as you have been forgiven. You can forgive first, because you belong to the Father's Kingdom. And in this way Christ knits us together, ties our stories together, makes us sisters and brothers, which according to the whims of our old Adam might never have happened. And so our family grows, and family time is every Sunday, as meet in the house of God our Father. Blessed Advent- blessed Coming of Christ and blessed "family" time! Amen.

*The Lord Jesus Christ says: "Surely I am coming soon.'Amen. Come. Lord Jesus!*

*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all of you." Amen.*