

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
www.lutheranlccf.org

Palm Sunday, April 9, 2017

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 162, 237:1, 372, 160, 161.

Lessons: Zechariah 9:9, Philippians 2:5-11, Mark 11:1-10.

Sermon Text: Luke 19:28-38.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Some of you have heard this lesson many, many times. Some of you have heard it only a few times or you do not remember it at all, but it is an important lesson for Christians to remember.

Jesus was now in the last week of his life on earth. The climax of his work was yet to come. Within five days people in Jerusalem would be shouting “Crucify him! Crucify him!” but today they welcome him as a King! Today let’s look at

JESUS’ RIDE INTO JERUSALEM

- 1. Preparation for this ride.**
- 2. The people welcome him as they would a king!**

Jesus had just told a parable that encourages us to make wise use of all the gifts that God has given us. That encouragement ended with the sharp warning: ***“I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.”*** Luke 19:26 (NIV) We could talk for a long time about the gifts we have been given by God. Our recent sermons on the Apostolic Creed have shown us all the gifts that God has given us, from life and breath and all we need for our body and life to the things that Jesus Christ has done for us to the way the Holy Ghost has delivered God’s spiritual gifts to us.

As we look at the church year calendar, we see that today is our last worship Sunday before we worship on the day Jesus was betrayed, suffered on the cross and died for us.

Today was a remarkable day in the life of Jesus on earth. He finally accepted praise from the people who called him a king and wanted to honor him as a king.

Look at the preparation for this ride. ***“As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and 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 untying it?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it.’” Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, ‘Why are you untying the colt?’ They replied, ‘The Lord needs it.’ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it.”***

How would you react if someone climbed into your car or truck and wanted to take it just like that? Suppose that that person said “the Lord needs it.” Wouldn’t we still think that someone was trying to steal our transportation? And yet that’s not what happened in this situation. Did the owners of the colt know these two disciples? We don’t know. Perhaps they did, and that may be why the disciples’ answer set the minds of the owners at ease when they took the colt.

But we can find a more important lesson in what might appear to be an unauthorized use of animals. How do we react when there is need in the church? How do we react when there is a need for the kingdom of God? Isn’t it the traditional American way, really, the traditional sinful way to hold on to the billfold tightly? Now that’s surely not always true, for our congregations have been very generous in their working to support the gospel in our midst. ***“The Lord hath need.”*** (KJV)

Yet although our financial contributions may be generous, isn't there often a reluctance or a difficulty in making time for the Lord? The need may be giving our time to help clean or maintain our church property. The need may be volunteering to help with the duties of serving the congregation in various ways. The need may even be taking time to teach our children the Word of God – the catechism, memorizing Bible passages and the truths of God's Word. ***"The Lord hath need."*** (KJV)

But don't you also remember that we have a mission that is greater than just supporting the gospel in our midst? We are told in Matthew 28 to ***"go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"*** Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV) and in Mark 16: ***"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."*** Mark 16:15 (NIV) How can we do that – tell the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations?

We are rightly concerned about unionism, that is, unscriptural church fellowship. On every hand we have opportunities to get involved in some kind of church work with people of other religious convictions, with people of other faiths. These kinds of things seem very appealing when we have a twinge of conscience reminding us that we are not preaching the gospel to the world. Well, yes, we have our Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship website. Oh yes, we make our ministry by mail sermons available but that is only about 20 copies of sermons sent out to people who are not members of our churches, and there are seven billion people in the world, a majority of whom do not believe in Jesus Christ as the only Savior from sin. It is difficult for us to send the gospel into all the world. I am sure that when Christ told us to spread the gospel to the entire world that he was aware of the kinds of technology that God would permit mankind to develop. After all, he is the omnipotent God. He surely knew that mankind would develop the printing press and radio and television and Internet. But at the moment we are only using two of those media and really in a very tiny way. What else is there? How else can we spread the gospel, the true gospel, without compromising that gospel? Well, the best way is personal contact, you telling others what you believe. And, of course, you must know what God's Word teaches so that you can teach it to others. Yet there must be even other God-pleasing ways we can get the Gospel out to the world.

We must always pray to the Lord of the harvest that he send out workers into his harvest. Jesus himself said ***"unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."*** Matthew 9:37-38 (KJV) Prayer. That is something we can do at any time any day. The hymn writer reminds us: "What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer."

So in our prayers we are praying "thy will be done". God's will includes that his Word be shared and given to others, too, and not hoarded for ourselves.

The goal of our faith, of our worship about praising the Lord is that others would come to know him. Look at how the message was spread on the day we call Palm Sunday, five days before Jesus accomplished his work.

The people greeted him as a king. ***"As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'"***

The people welcomed and praised him as the King who comes in the name of the Lord! They were surely sincere in their greetings and praise and worship of Jesus. Yet did they really know what all this meant?

He is a king, but not in the way that many people expected. There were times throughout his ministry when Jesus escaped to the wilderness to pray when people wanted to make him a king – an earthly king. On this day in Jerusalem he accepts their praise, even though some of them were surely hoping he would become an earthly king.

An earthly king has power and authority to rule a country and at many times in history actually led the battles of his people. In the Old Testament, God gave kings to his chosen people, the descendants of Abraham, to rule them. The kings fought their battles and protected them. As your King, Christ with his almighty power rules over all creatures, governs and protects his church, and finally leads it to glory. That final action will occur on judgment day, when Jesus takes all believers to heaven to share his glory.

The most important battle Jesus would fight would be to conquer Satan, to crush his head. This would require Jesus' death on the cross but you know how that really ended three days after Jesus' death!

As our King, Jesus is our ruler, guiding all things and protecting his people. We can be assured, as Paul wrote in Romans: ***"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"*** Romans 8:31-32 (NIV) But you can be sure that not everyone who greeted him really recognized him as the kind of king he really is.

When he was on trial before Pontius Pilate, we read that Pilate ***"summoned Jesus and asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews? 'Is that your own idea,' Jesus asked, 'or did others talk to you about me?' 'Am I a Jew?' Pilate replied. 'It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?' Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.' 'You are a king, then!' said Pilate. Jesus answered, 'You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.'"*** John 18:33-37 (NIV)

Then, after he was crucified, Pilate wrote the label, the superscription on the cross. That told everyone in three languages that this was 'Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews'. But he is more than just King of the Jews. We today pray that every day that we recognize Jesus as our King, too, in our lives.

On judgment day it will happen that everyone must recognize Jesus as King, as the supreme ruler who has all power, all authority. But not everyone who must recognize Jesus as King will do so joyfully. Unbelievers must recognize this fact with dread and terror. There really is a God! Jesus Christ was real! And now I am condemned for my unbelief! For all who rejected him, it will be a day of terror, for they will then realize that Jesus Christ really is all he claimed to be.

For believers this will be a joyous rejoicing. For that we shout just what these people did on that first Palm Sunday: Hosanna! We will be overjoyed that we shall be taken away from all trouble, sorrow, and pain. We will rejoice that we shall then join in praise and worship glorifying Jesus Christ as our King forever. For all who trust in Jesus as their Savior from sin, it will be the beginning of a spectacular, joyous time praising Jesus as our King forever in heaven.

Today the people welcome Jesus as king. Five days later their leaders will be shouting, as the evangelist John records: ***"'Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!' 'Shall I crucify your king?' Pilate asked. 'We have no king but Caesar,' the chief priests answered."*** John 19:15 (NIV) How sad, how terrible that they did not recognize Jesus as King in faith! How sad and devastating for them that they deceived and misled the people under their care!

So even though we weren't there personally, we today joyfully praise God! ***"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*** Hosanna!

So today's happy events, although they lead up to terrible events on Thursday and Friday, will lead to another happy event which we celebrate next Sunday, when Jesus Christ rose from the dead! Come back and join in that celebration. Amen