

Palm Sunday – April 13, 2014
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church

Pastor Charles Heup

Matthew 21:1 - 11 (NIV)

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Dear friends in Christ Jesus:

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Jesus and his disciples were enroute to Jerusalem. This was one of many trips that Jesus made to this city and the temple that was there. He was only 40 days old the first time he went there to be presented to the Lord by his parents in keeping with the Law of Moses. At age 12 we are told he went there to celebrate the Passover, again in obedience to the Law. While he was there he explained to his parents that he had to be in his father's house. In other words Jesus was there because he knew it was God's will for him – all of this was part of the divine plan for the salvation of the world. Jesus is about 33 years old when he approaches Jerusalem for the last time. Jesus had already clearly explained to his disciples why he was going there and what would happen while they were there. He had to go because it was in keeping with God's will for him. In Jerusalem he would not only celebrate the Passover as required by the law – he would actually fulfill the Passover by sacrificing himself as the Lamb of God for the sins of the World. By doing so, Jesus would fulfill God's plan. God's saving kingdom was founded on the humble obedience of the Messiah-King – on his suffering, death, and resurrection. The accounts of Palm Sunday help us to see that Jesus is our Savior who fulfilled the Scriptures for us. They invite us to offer our praise and our service to him.

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He told two of his disciples that he wanted a donkey. His orders must have seemed a bit strange: **Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.** Without hesitation they were to untie the animals and bring them to Jesus. Jesus not only knew that the animals would be there. He also knew that the owner would be more than willing to allow him to use them. **If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."**

We see evidence of Jesus' divine knowledge of all things – he knew where the animals would be found, he knew the disciples would have no trouble finding them and he knew that the owner would be more than happy to lend them to Lord for his use. And what is more Jesus knew that he needed to do this in order to fulfill Scripture. This wasn't just a whim on Jesus part – it was part of a divine plan – which he had come to fulfill. And as we see again his fulfillment of the Scriptures our faith in him as the promised Savior is strengthened.

Our text assures us that Jesus wanted the donkey to fulfill Scripture. **(4) This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: (5) "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.' "**

Jesus really did enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey. That entry marked him as the King promised to the Jewish nation – but his Kingship was not typical of earthly kings. He came in a gently fashion. He didn't ride in on a prancing stallion. He didn't drive a war chariot. He wasn't armed with spear, sword, helmet and shield leading an army of soldiers to drive out the oppressive Romans. No the Messiah King would come gently and riding on a donkey – a common beast of burden. The prophet described the promised Savior as one who would have a gentle attitude – an attitude which displayed a humble, glad, and confident dependence on God. He had the desire to do whatever God willed even if it seemed mysterious and strange. The Messiah King would come armed with the Word and armed with trust that his Father would give him success in carrying out God's will. Jesus' perfect agreement with the Father's will and his complete confidence in his Father's blessing stands in sharp contrast to our frequent questions and grumbling concerning the Father's will. His complete dependence on the promises of Scripture stands in contrast to our failures to take the Lord at his word. We give evidence of those failures by our worries, our frustrations and failures to follow that word.

It's here that we see Jesus taking our place – doing what we fail to do. And it's here that we see Jesus headed to take our place – by willingly going to die the death we deserved to die. Jesus wanted a donkey to enable him to fulfill the Scripture. That donkey would serve the Lord by carrying him into the city where Jesus would be acclaimed as the Messiah by the crowds who had gathered there to celebrate the Passover.

(6) The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. (7) They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. (8) A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (9) The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

It wasn't just a donkey that served the Lord – the two unnamed disciples served the Lord by going and doing what Jesus told them. The owner of the animals served the Lord by allowing the disciples to take them for Jesus. The crowd spread cloaks on the road – a practice dating back to OT times to show honor for a king – similar to our practice of putting out a red carpet. Others cut down branches from the Palm trees that lined the way and honored Jesus by waving them and placing them as a covering for the path.

Along with their actions the crowd served and honored Jesus with their words – they selected some very fitting words to honor Jesus – words the Psalmist used in Psalm 118 to address the Savior King. Hosanna they cried – every time we say that word we're really speaking a Hebrew word – Hosanna – the word means "please save us." As the crowds of people used the word they used it as word to greet and praise Jesus as their Savior. They also called Jesus the Son of David – again that's another clear way of confessing that they saw him as the promised Savior. The Lord promised David that he would raise up one of his off spring to rule over an eternal kingdom. The people praised Jesus as the one who had come to fulfill that promise: **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord**, they exclaimed. The coming one – that was a common way the people spoke about the Savior. When John the Baptist's disciples wanted to know if Jesus was the promised Messiah – they asked are you the coming one -- (Matthew 11:2-3) **"Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"**

Everything about this event including the donkey – Jesus needed to fulfill the Scriptures and to serve him remind us that Jesus is our Savior – the one who is worthy of our service and praise because he came to serve us as in keeping with his Father's plan for our salvation.

Most likely not everyone in the crowd realized the full impact of what they were saying and what was happening that day. They may not have understood the spiritual nature of Jesus' kingdom and that it would have to be established through his death and resurrection. Jesus tells us plainly that not even his disciples understood all of this. It was only after his glorious resurrection that they realized that the things that had been written about him and what they truly meant. But never-the-less Jesus accepted the divine praise which they used to honor him because they were speaking the truth about him. The Holy Spirit caused their words and the words of this event to be preserved for us in the Scriptures so that people of all places and all times may learn the truth about Jesus.

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."

Still today people have questions about Jesus. They wonder who he really was. They wonder why he lived and died the way he did. They wonder how his life affects their life. Some may have more understanding than others. The crowds of people pointed to Jesus as the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee but our Scripture tells us so much more. It tells us that he's the Savior. He came to fulfill the Scriptures – may we serve him as we tell others that Jesus is the Son of God, who came to rescue all people from sin with his perfect life and innocent death. He rose from the dead and rules in our hearts through the Gospel. He will come again to take all who believe in him to live with him in glory. By the grace of God you have the answer to the question, "Who is this?" What could possibly keep us from joining the crowds of people who praised and served him? What could possibly keep us from telling others the truth that Jesus is their Savior? You can join the crowd this Easter season as you sing your Savior's praise and as you serve him by telling others who he is. In fact you can praise the Lord every day as you gladly welcome him into your hearts by faith, praise him with your lips and yield yourselves to him in willing service

Amen.

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(6) The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. (7) They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. (8) A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (9) The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

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Along with their actions the crowd served and honored Jesus with their words – they selected some very fitting words to honor Jesus – words the Psalmist used in Psalm 118 to address the Savior King. Hosanna they cried – every time we say that word we're really speaking a Hebrew word – Hosanna – the word means "please save us." As the crowds of people used the word they used it as word to greet and praise Jesus as their Savior. They also called Jesus the Son of David – again that's another clear way of confessing that they saw him as the promised Savior. The Lord promised David that he would raise up one of his off spring to rule over an eternal kingdom. The people praised Jesus as the one who had come to fulfill that promise: **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord**, they exclaimed. The coming one – that was a common way the people spoke about the Savior. When John the Baptist's disciples wanted to know if Jesus was the promised Messiah – they asked are you the coming one -- (Matthew 11:2-3) **"Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"**

Everything about this event including the donkey – Jesus needed to fulfill the Scriptures and to serve him remind us that Jesus is our Savior – the one who is worthy of our service and praise because he came to serve us as in keeping with his Father's plan for our salvation.

Most likely not everyone in the crowd realized the full impact of what they were saying and what was happening that day. They may not have understood the spiritual nature of Jesus' kingdom and that it would have to be established through his death and resurrection. Jesus tells us plainly that not even his disciples understood all of this. It was only after his glorious resurrection that they realized that the things that had been written about him and what they truly meant. But never-the-less Jesus accepted the divine praise which they used to honor him because they were speaking the truth about him. The Holy Spirit caused their words and the words of this event to be preserved for us in the Scriptures so that people of all places and all times may learn the truth about Jesus.

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Amen.

Palm Sunday – April 13, 2014
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church

Pastor Charles Heup

Matthew 21:1 - 11 (NIV)

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Dear friends in Christ Jesus:

If you browsed through the classified ads in the local newspaper this week you might have discovered an ad placed by a real estate agent who was looking for ranch homes and condos. Someone wanted to hire a farm and garden worker. Bonnie's Housekeeping wanted housekeepers. If you happen to have a semi-trailer someone wanted one and is willing to pay you up to \$1500. There were several individuals who wanted to rent farmland.

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