

Christ the King
4/5/20 Palm Sunday, ABC
Selected Scripture

Good morning & welcome to Palm Sunday, 2020. None of us have probably experienced a Palm Sunday quite like this one. The good news is, even though we can't be together physically, we can be together in our worship of & hearing from God through His Word this morning. I thought we might begin with a song or two but quickly nixed that idea as it would have you all running from your houses screaming in agony. No singing from me; you can do that on your own.

I'm encouraged that as I've called around that many of you are actively reaching out to others by calls, texts, &/or emails. I pray that this continues even past the time of covid-19. That we would be a church who stays in touch with one another & doesn't just gather on Sundays. If you have needs, let us know & we will do our very best to meet them.

While I'm glad you're watching this I encourage you to watch/listen to others today as they proclaim the good news that Jesus is King & that He's still reigning over all. With that in mind, this isn't a full length sermon, just some thoughts to encourage you during this time of anxiety & fear for so many. I encourage you not to be consumed with the 24 hour news onslaught. In the words of Lukas Nelson, Willie's son, *Turn off the news & build a garden*. Better yet, *turn off the news & read your Bible*. If we live on a diet of fear & anxiety we won't experience God's peace that He so willingly gives. In other words, do we trust in the media or do we trust in God? Isn't it good to know that covid-19 isn't sovereign over all? Coronavirus is not king. Our Triune God still holds that position & always will. I'm just going to read through a few Scriptures & then we'll turn to the Coronation of Christ in Matthew 21.

1 Kings 22:19 -- Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, & all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right & on His left.

Psalm 9:7-10 -- The LORD abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment, & He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity. The LORD also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, A stronghold in times of trouble; & those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

Psalm 11:4 -- The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven.

Psalm 45:6 -- Your throne, O God, is forever & ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

Psalm 47:8 -- God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne.

Psalm 93:1-2 -- The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed & girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.

Psalm 103:19 -- The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, & His sovereignty rules over all.

Lamentations 3:37-38 – Who is there who speaks & it comes to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both good & ill go forth?

Isaiah 6:1 -- In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty & exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.

Amos 3:6 – If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the Lord done it?

Hebrews 8:1 -- the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

Hebrews 12:1-3 -- Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance & the sin which so easily entangles us, & let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author & perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, & has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary & lose heart.

Psalm 96 -- ¹Sing to the Lord a new song; Sing to the Lord, all the earth.

²Sing to the Lord, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.

³Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.

⁴For great is the Lord & greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.

⁵For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the Lord made the heavens.

⁶Splendor & majesty are before Him, Strength & beauty are in His sanctuary.

⁷Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the Lord glory & strength.

⁸Ascribe to the Lord the glory of His name; Bring an offering & come into His courts.

⁹Worship the Lord in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth.

¹⁰Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity."

¹¹Let the heavens be glad, & let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, & all it contains;

¹²Let the field exult, & all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy

¹³Before the Lord, for He is coming, For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness And the peoples in His faithfulness.

God is still on His sovereign throne. Jesus is still King. The Holy Spirit is still alive & well in each of us. PRAY

What I want to do this morning is help you hear Jesus' own declaration of His kingship & what allowing Him to be your King means to you. I want to try to do this in a way that makes sure you see the nature of His kingship now & how it'll be different when He comes again. The nature of Jesus' current kingship has created a time of salvation during which each of us can come to Him & be saved from our sins & from His coming judgment. There's still time, even this morning, to accept the deliverance from sin that King Jesus holds out to each of us. You can bow & receive Christ as your King & swear allegiance to Him & be on His side with everlasting joy. To help you see the wonder of this time of salvation, remember that the day is coming when the kingship of Jesus will be very different than it is now. Here's a description of His coming kingship. John tells us, in Rev 19:11-16,

I saw heaven opened; & behold, a white horse, & He who sat upon it is called Faithful & True; & in righteousness He judges & wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, & upon His head are many diadems; He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; & His name is called The Word of God.... From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; He will rule them with a rod of iron; He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. & on His robe & on His thigh He has a name written, KING OF KINGS, & LORD OF LORDS.

That's King Jesus. Is He your King? When Jesus appears like that, it'll be too late to switch sides. That's why Paul says, **Behold, now is *the acceptable time*, behold, now is *the day of salvation*** (2 Cor 6:2). What Matthew wants us to hear & what Jesus wants us to see is that right now, He's a welcoming, seeking, forgiving, & patient King. He shed His own blood to save all who will accept His free gift of forgiveness & come to Him & believe & receive Him. Until He comes again, this is the wonder of His kingship. He saves sinners. Is He your King? There are at least 4 ways in Mt 21 that Jesus declares His kingship in His triumphal entry on Palm Sunday. All of them are Jewish, which is fitting because He was a Jew & was fulfilling Jewish promises of a coming Jewish King & Messiah. But all of them go beyond that too. Remember, this gospel is going to end in chapter 28 with the resurrected Jesus saying, **All authority has been given to Me in heaven & on earth. Go therefore & make disciples of all the nations** (Mt 28:18-19). Let's listen & watch as He declares Himself King.

1. JESUS DECLARES HIS KINGSHIP BY RIDING ON A DONKEY In Mt 21:1-5, Jesus sends 2 of His disciples to get a donkey for Him. Why? What's He doing? Why does He want to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey? He's never done this before. Matthew tells us why in **vss 4-5**.

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: **"SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, & MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'"**

This is a quote from the prophet Zechariah. Jesus has chosen to act out the fulfillment of this prophecy & to declare His kingship by riding on a donkey. By doing this Jesus is saying, *Yes, I am King. That's what Zechariah says it means. But, I'm gentle & lowly. I'm not on a white war-horse with a sword & a rod of iron. I'm coming to save you. Today is the day of salvation.* He isn't a Nero who fiddled while Rome burns. He isn't a despot who lives in lavish luxury while his people languish in poverty. No, He's a gentle King who has your best interests at heart. Jesus very intentionally acts out this fulfillment & declares His humble, gentle, saving kingship. He also came as a peacemaker. In Lk 19:41 we read, **When He drew near & saw the city He wept over it, saying, *Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace!*** His choice of a donkey to enter the city was like coming in under a white flag, not of surrender, but of a desire to make peace. If that weren't enough, just a few vss earlier in Lk 19:38 Luke tells us that the people were shouting, **Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven & glory in the highest!** King Jesus came as a peacemaker. & not just peace on earth between man & man, but also peace in heaven between God & man. **Peace in Heaven!** the people shouted. *Let God in heaven be at peace with His people!* In essence, Jesus says, *I am meek & lowly in heart. I'm approachable. You can find rest for your souls here. I'm not against you, I am for you. I didn't come to condemn but to save; I come on behalf of My Father in heaven, to reconcile you to Him—to make peace between you & your Maker.* How did King Jesus make peace between sinful people & a holy God? Col 1:20 tells us that He made peace **by the blood of His cross**. Jesus died to make peace between God & sinners. Looking back from this side of Good Friday & Easter we can see all that in the words, **Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey** (Zech 9:9). He is righteous, which means He can be our perfect substitute & fulfill

all that we've failed to do. He brings, has, & is salvation. He was willing to be rejected & despised & killed for you. & He's riding on a donkey, which means He wants to make peace not war & that's why He gives Himself up to death. Peter preached in Acts,

this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power (2:23-24).

That's King Jesus! Do you know Him? Because God saved Jesus from death & raised Him up alive forever, He can save you. He comes to you this morning as a peacemaker. He's laid down His life so that He can offer you reconciliation. He doesn't want there to be a barrier between you & Him. He doesn't want hostility or indifference to stand in the way. & Jesus still says to you, **O that you knew the terms of peace.** & He invites you to receive it. That's our King. Do you know Him? Do you trust Him?

2. JESUS DECLARES HIS KINGSHIP BY CLEANSING THE TEMPLE In vs 12-13 Jesus acts out another OT text.

Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. & He said to them, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER'; but you are making it a ROBBERS' DEN."

Don't think that this meek, gentle, lowly Savior-King was without passion for His Father's glory or without power! To explain what He's doing He quotes Isaiah 56:7. There are 2 things that make this action & this quote so significant. One is that the context in Isaiah is about the coming kingdom of God. Jesus is putting Himself in the position of the coming King. The other is that the context is global, not just Jewish. Listen to Is 56:6-8.

The foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to Him, & to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the Sabbath & holds fast My covenant; Even those I will bring to My holy mountain & make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings & their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples. The Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, *Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered.*

Jesus uses an OT passage to interpret His action in the temple, one that proclaims His kingship is *for all the peoples*. That's still true today. It's true for you this morning. King Jesus is jealous to open His Father's house to you today. Do you know Him?

3. JESUS DECLARES HIS KINGSHIP BY HEALING Vs 14 says, *the blind and the lame* came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. Imagine what an impact this must have had. We're talking about the most public place in the city, the temple itself. He publically & obviously heals the blind & lame. This was a public demonstration of the miraculous. But what is Jesus declaring by healing people? Back in Mt 11 John the Baptist was in jail & he sent a question to Jesus: **Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?** (3). In other words, *Are you the coming King of Israel, the Messiah?* Jesus answered (4-5), **Go & report to John what you hear & see: the blind receive sight & the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed & the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, & the poor have the gospel preached to them.** What does that mean? *Yes. I am the coming King, the Messiah, the Expected One.* Why does the healing of the blind & the lame in the temple after coming into Jerusalem on a donkey mean that He's the expected King? Because in Isaiah 35 the prophet describes the coming kingship of the Messiah like this: **Take courage, fear not... The recompense of God will come, But He will save you. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened. & the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer & the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy** (4-6). Jesus comes on a donkey, lowly, gentle, & patient. He comes cleansing His Father's house to make it a house of prayer for all the nations. He comes healing the blind & the lame to show that His Kingship has come. It's not just a kingship over other kings, but over disease & all of nature. He's a supernatural King. Do you know Him? Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. Receive His pardon. Become His subject. Trust Him. Trust Him with your health or lack thereof. He is King & knows what He is doing even in the smallest details of your life.

4. JESUS DECLARES HIS KINGSHIP BY HIS RESPONSE TO CHILDREN Jesus declares His kingship by the way He responds to what the people & the children are doing & saying on that Palm Sunday. In vs 8 the crowds are spreading their cloaks & branches on the road in front of Him. In vs 9 the crowds are shouting, **Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!** Then in vs 15 the children shout the same things: **Hosanna to the Son of David. The King is here!** But the chief priests became angry & ask Jesus, **Do you hear what these are saying?**

(16). They can't believe He's letting all this happen unchallenged. Jesus answers their question with a simple word & then an absolutely astonishing quote from Ps 8. They say, **Do you hear what these children are saying?** & He answers, **Yes. *I not only hear it. I planned it.*** Then, He quotes Ps 8, **Have you never read, *Out of the mouth of infants & nursing babes You have prepared praise for Yourself?*** What's so astonishing about this is that in context it clearly refers to God.

O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! From the mouth of infants & nursing babes You have established strength or praise Because of Your adversaries (1-2).

Don't miss this. Jesus receives the praises of children proclaiming Him King & explains it by quoting a psalm where children are praising God. That's King Jesus, God incarnate. Do you know Him? The King has come & is going to come again as the King over all kings. King of Israel, King of all the nations, King of nature & the universe. Until He comes again, there's a time of opportunity for forgiveness & salvation. King Jesus isn't yet riding a white war-horse swinging a sword & ruling with a rod of iron. He's ready to save all who receive Him as Savior & King. Come to Him. Know Him. Receive Him.

What does it mean that Jesus is King? It means nothing has ever taken Him by surprise. Not ever. Not Adam & Eve's sin. Not Israel's rejection of their Messiah. & not of Covid-19. He is still on His throne & sovereign over all. He has a plan & is at work on behalf of His people. God's got this. He's got us. He is powerful & able to do far more than we could ever imagine. Fix your eyes on Him & trust Him completely. Don't be panic & be anxious. Trust Him, your King.

Nature isn't sovereign. Satan isn't sovereign. Sinful man isn't sovereign. Some virus isn't sovereign. God rules them all (Lk 8:25; Job 1:12; 2:6; Acts 4:27–28). So, we say with Job, **I know that You can do all things, & that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted (42:2).** God not only understands everything about the coronavirus; He has purposes for it. God does nothing, & permits nothing, without wise purposes. Nothing *just happens*. Everything flows from the eternal counsels of God (Eph 1:11). All of it is wisdom. All of it is purposeful. For those who trust Jesus as their King,

all of it is kindness. For others, it is a merciful wake-up call: **Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price** (Rev 22:17).

Our sure & certain hope is in our Savior & God, King Jesus. We anchor our soul in His Word in which He reveals Himself to us. Go to God's Word & see the greatness & beauty & worth of King Jesus (Phil 3:8). Treasure Him far above health & life (Ps 63:3). & see to it that God is glorified in you, as you are satisfied & completely at rest in Him. As subjects of our King, we ought to be the calmest people on earth because we know the true King & we know He holds the future securely in His hands. This is a time for all of us to rise above the fray & fright. This is a time for all of us as believers to demonstrate our trust in our King. Believe me, there's no panic in heaven over this pandemic. The corona virus is under His control. Your job is under His control. The stock market is under His control. Focus on your King, Jesus & remember who He is, count on His promises, & all will be well for all of eternity. As Jeremiah writes, **This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him"** (Lamentations 3:21–24). Is your hope truly in Him, King Jesus? PRAY