

**Lesson: Mark 11:1-10**

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>3</sup> If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.' "

<sup>4</sup> They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, <sup>5</sup> some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" <sup>6</sup> They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. <sup>7</sup> When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. <sup>8</sup> Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. <sup>9</sup> Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" <sup>10</sup> "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!" – NIV84

**Prayer of the Day:**

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your strength and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day:** Revelation 22:20

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

**Sermon Text:**

Well, here we are! It's Advent again. The Christian Church Year has reset, and we find ourselves in the half-year of the Christ once more. What better place to start than at the very beginning to right? Longingly waiting the celebration birth of our Savior, God in flesh for you and for me. This one even our world at least still seems to celebrate even if it's lost all notion of the real meaning of the day and so if you are like me the Christmas feels will slowly start to build over the season of Advent as Christmas Eve draws closer and closer and the Angels prepare to burst forth on Christmas morning.

Maybe that's why our Gospel lesson seems so jarring in it's placement today. It's not the usual Advent fair. In fact, it's Palm Sunday! We've jumped all of a sudden passed the long-expected birth, passed the Wisemen and that prophesied flight for safety from Herod to Egypt, even passed Lent. I kinda makes want to say "Whoa! Ease back on the reigns here a bit and let us enjoy the season at hand."

Ah, but this lesson is actually a perfect fit nestled here at the beginning of Advent this year as we contemplate the worship theme through the season of "The King Shall Come" for here He does. Here He is entering into Jerusalem.

We know the account well, don't we? The spot-on instructions, the donkey, the cloaks, the palm branches. The cry of the people this day has even made its way into our liturgies, the Sanctus transports us to these words just before we hear the Words of Institution for Holy Communion. But you know, every year I wonder, I wonder even as my heart swells at the sight of Jesus getting the welcome, He so rightly deserved. Do these people really know what they are saying? Do they

really see Jesus even as He is right in front of them? I wonder because of course we know the rest of the history. In the course of five days, those cries of “Hosanna”, literally “Save us” become “Crucify Him!!” before Pontius Pilate and the stone pavement. And there is no doubt in my mind that at least so of this was because people thought Jesus was coming to do something else, to be someone else, an earthly King with an earthly throne who would cast Rome from the fertile crescent and reestablish glory days of David and Solomon once more.

It makes me then wonder still further if I fail to see Jesus when He stands right in front of me. Do I miss Him, yes, even in the trappings of this season as I watch all the right movies and set up all the right decorations to recreate all those feelings from seasons past but forget to take time to meditate on the Word, yes, the Word made flesh, for us, for you, for me. Have I wanted an earthly king to come and make things better here so much that I even at times miss the point, miss the real grandeur of what my King actually has come to do? Yes, I know God that you took care of the sins of the world and defeated death and satan forever but You didn’t fix my problem the way I wanted right now Lord, You’re not the King I expected, the One I want(ed) right now!

And then, if you’ll permit me one more pondering, I find myself asking if I have failed to see God, then does God see me? Should I even expect it? I know I haven’t earned it! Those words of Isaiah the prophet in our first lesson cut like a knife even though they were spoken to Israel, *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”*

Ah, but dear friends that’s why this lesson from Palm Sunday is so wonderful here at the beginning of Advent too. For when we were all of that, when Israel was all of that, what does God do? It will make you gasp really as contemplate it. He sees you! He see you better than you even see yourself, understand yourself, know yourself and because He does. He saves you!

Just ponder it anew this season as the King comes for you. Humble and low because He knows full well that if He comes in all His power and glory, we would all be incinerated in the holiness of Him, because He knows that saving sinful human beings will require more than what we can do, He will have to do it for us, die for us as He fulfills the cries of “Hosanna”, “God save us” with the cross, despised and rejected by those He came to save. All this so that He might provide that throne for David that would never wear out or fade away because He would sit on it, ruling, guiding, guarding the Church, His people into everlasting glory.

Oh yes that of course is one its way too. It’s all made possible by the realities of the first coming so humble in a manger, eventually on a donkey, ultimately to a cross. Now remember dear friends, He’s not done! He’ll come again! And then not in humility but in might! Then in the glory we have so often craved and so seldom seen as He draws sinful humanity to Himself. Then as we heard last week to separate the sheep from goats, then to call us to be with Him forever in heaven, forever with Him, forever in perfection. Oh, dear friends, His goals are so much greater than our own, with far greater and more lasting results. It’s embarrassing really to think that I would ever question Him, ever second guess His glorious and perfect rule.

Ah, but then He sees me ... sees you too ... So our King comes! He comes to fulfill our Hosannas! He comes to Save! Amen!