

Advent 1, November 27, 2016

Your King Is Coming!

Matthew 21:1–11



Dear Friends in Christ,

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”
(2 Corinthians 13:14)

Today is the first Sunday in Advent and also the beginning of a new church year. And on this first Sunday of the new church year, our meditation is based on the Gospel reading of Mathew chapter 21, which tells us that the King is coming! And that is Good News indeed! But how should we receive him?

There was a time back home, when I visited some families at their homes, when I came at the door, I will knock and when somebody would come to the door and learned it was the church worker visiting them, I would be asked to wait there for a few moments, while the family, or whoever was home would go and do some quick

tidying up, maybe sweeping the floors, or clear the dishes or whatever it was that they needed to do to welcome the visitor in.

I was no king of course, but they certainly wanted to welcome their guest they best way possible. The busyness of life, or the season, or their economic situation, of the families I came to visit, didn't allow them to have things in order on an everyday bases. That kind of information might cause us to prejudice other people, because we are clean and organized, right? Maybe yes maybe not!

But on this first day of Advent and the start of this new Church Year, I'm giving each of you advanced notice: Your King Is Coming! How are you receiving him?

And I'm not talking about any earthly ruler visiting, but Jesus Christ, the true King of this world, this universe, all galaxies, and especially the King of your lives, is coming!

I. Jesus comes humbly as the king we need.

Some of you may respond, “That's old news.” Yes it is, yes our King has come. Jesus came, died, rose again, and ascended. I should tell you something we don't know. Right?

Because, we know, yes we know, that long before Jesus was born and long before Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem, the prophet Zechariah had given Israel advanced notice, he said: “Behold, your king is coming to you; . . . humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zech .9:9b).

And what the Prophet announced came true, it is what's happening in the Gospel reading for today as Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. We know the story, it's a great story!

But what we don't think much about is that this same Jesus who entered Jerusalem continues to come to us today and one day, on the last day, will come in

glory and majesty. Therefore, it does us good to go beyond the biblical stories. Biblical stories are good lessons, but many a times we take those stories, as they are, just stories, good and wonderful, yes, but end up beings just stories.

We need to ask the question, how that story applies to me, what it means to me, here, now, today... what it means for my life.

For example, rather than giving up on the story of the Gospel reading for today, lets allow it to guide us to recognize how our King comes to us and how we are to welcome him. Because, the King is coming! Take it as an advanced notice, a notice of good news.

Yes, he is coming! Just as he came to the People of Jerusalem in our Gospel reading as the Prophet announced it. And how did the people of Jerusalem recognize Jesus as their king? Not by elegant clothes or the horse chariots flanking him. Instead, they trusted in that promise given by the prophet Zechariah: "Your king is coming to you; . . . humble, and mounted on a donkey." The king they needed was not an arrogant tyrant but a humble servant who would enter Jerusalem as Solomon had so long ago when he succeeded David: riding on a lowly donkey. Here was the humble King the world needs, someone who would reverse the pattern of sinful selfishness through humble service by dying a humiliating death naked on the cross in the place of every sinner. Jesus came as the humble King the world needs.

But there is more the Gospel lesson is leading us to learn today, here are some of those lessons.

First, today's Gospel shows us that we need to trust God's promises, for his promises are yours in Christ, for today, here, and now.

Your King is coming! How do we recognize Jesus' coming in our day and age? As in the first century, so also in the twenty-first century, our King is not recognized by elegant clothing or high social status, or a limousine. No, he continues to come as the humble King we need, the King who serves rather than being served. As we look back over the Church Year that we've just completed, there are things that happened that we would rather forget. Things that make you blush, or keep you awake at night, or is making your life miserable, you are for a clean slate and new start.

But here is the good news: your King comes to you, in fact, that's why he comes to you. He comes clothed in humble words like "Your sins are forgiven." He comes clothed in common words like the invocation of the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to assure you that you will always be his children, no matter what happened last year, because you can receive forgiveness. He comes clothed in lowly bread and wine, which are his very body and blood, feeding you with life that lasts forever. He comes as the King we need, forgiving sins, showing grace upon grace!

II. We welcome this king as our Savior and Lord.

The second lesson we learn, in this Gospel reading, comes by looking at how the people of Jerusalem welcomed their king. They gathered a large group, spreading out their garments and tree branches on the road. They shouted, "Hosanna, Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." That one word, hosanna, says it all. It means "Save, we pray." The people welcomed their King as the only one who could save them from sin. They welcomed him as one who comes in the name of the Lord because he is not just representing the Lord, but he shares the very name of God, God Almighty!

Now, how about us, how will we welcome Jesus as he comes to us in this new Church Year and on the Last Day? Our Gospel encourages us to be like those in Jerusalem and welcome Jesus as our Savior and Lord with “Hosannas.” To say and shout: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (Psalm 118:26a)

We actually say those words already, don’t we? Every time we have communion and say what we call the “Sanctus” that is the Song of Holiness, that describes who God is, we say “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” “Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!”

Yes, Jesus our King, our humble King, comes to us today, in His word, in the forgiveness of sins, in Communion, bringing to each one of us what we really and exactly need, yes the forgiveness of our sins, life, and salvation.

He is here, and we the citizens of the New Jerusalem welcome him, we welcome him with shouts of hosannas, “Save, we pray,” “Save we pray” Lord.

And the third lesson is that we would fill our minds and hearts with his love, with his word with his gifts that change our lives, so that with voices we become agents of change in our world.

When the people of Jerusalem shouted their Hosannas on the streets back then, the religious leaders tried to silence them, tried to be politically correct, establish order in the city, but Jesus, well Jesus went against them, Do you know what he said? He said: “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.” (Luke 19:40)

His response was to the religious leaders, but I think it was also to the ones how were singing their “Hosannas.” It is as if he was telling them: “if you are silent, the very stones would cry out” so don’t be quiet, instead keep shouting “Hosanna” keep saying “Lord Save us” don’t be shamed or silenced by others. And that message is also for us, don’t stay silent, but sing, shout your “Hosanna” and not only sing and shout, but practice it. Now what does that mean?

For that I would like to show this short video clip, as you watch it, think about it as well. Let’s watch: (video)

Your King is coming! The King whose Kingdom lasts forever is coming to you! Yes, it might be old news, but it continues to be fresh good news today. From the moment Jesus entered Jerusalem to die for our sins, to this very moment. From the day when you were baptized and Jesus began to reign as the gracious King of your life, to everyday of your life. Not just this New Year but always.

And so that you see the excitement of this New Year, keep looking for the King coming to you, humbly and truly present with his gifts of life and salvation, and walk with him, walk with the King on the streets shouting “hosanna.”

Advent is a wonderful season for spiritual preparation and refreshment. Look at the streets where your King comes to you, humbly serving you, and humbling bring you to serve others as well. Look for him in the daily devotions that you share with your family, for there too your King comes to you. And as we mentioned in the announcements, this year you have a variety of devotions options you can use, choose what you like and use them, please do so, on your own, with your family, and please use them. Encourage your children to look and discuss, to talk about what happens in worship every Sunday. Use the bulletin insert for that purpose. Look for the King in the extra midweek Advent services we’ll have together, your King comes to you. In our Sunday services with Holy Communion, your King comes to you.

This new Church Year is a very special one to celebrate his coming, because this year we will also celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.

Think about that! Five hundred years of our King coming to us in the Word and Sacraments that Christ used the Reformation to set free for us! So today, welcome him, sing your hosannas, and pray with Luther that ancient cradle song:

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,

Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,

A quiet chamber set apart

For You to dwell within my heart. (LSB 358:13)

The King is coming "Hosanna" Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord!

Amen.