

Advent 1, December 3, 2017

The King Comes . . . How?

Mark 11:1–10



Dear Friends in Christ,

Last week we meditated on the coming King and being able to identify the real King. We even did a short exercise on that. Also, we learned that one way to identify the King to know his nature and his nature is like of a Good Shepherd, for he is the Good Shepherd.

And today we shall learn to identify the King in the manner of his coming. How is it that he comes to us, and he comes to use in a humble manner as the

Gospel reading for today teaches us.

Today we begin the season of advent, the time for preparation as we expect the coming of the Saviour, actually of the King. And if the King is about to come, how should we be prepared, or what's the implication of his coming?

As you know when a high profile dignitaries is about to visit, preparations need to be made, so that whoever that is could receive the utmost welcome, and the visit could make a lasting impact on the visitor but also in those the dignitary visits.

Now imagine Jesus entrance into Jerusalem! That would have been a sight! Right? After all his realm spans time and eternity! But did people recognize him for what he is?

I. Jesus' enthronement is not with pomp and pageantry, but with simple, sublime dignity.

Jesus the King entering Jerusalem on a donkey doesn't fit the profile of the King they were expecting. Back then as you probably know, the nation of Israel were expecting a king yes, but a king that would hold ultimate power, economic and political, so that this King would free the peoples of Israel from the roman oppression.

No, he doesn't fit the profile, just look at what happens. Jesus enters Jerusalem with simple, sublime dignity. On a donkey, no, there were no warhorses or chariots. No army that would make everybody to tremble or be hopeful. Nothing of that! So no he wasn't the king they were expecting, although, many probably saw in Jesus their hope for salvation and deliverance. Because they shout "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" (vv 9–10). Hosanna is a beautiful word. It means "Save now, Lord!" The crowds see Jesus as the one who will finally restore the kingdom as it was in the days of David. They see, in Jesus, their future. So how would you welcome the King? Seen in him your future! How would you identify the King, the true King, as the one who holds your future in his hands.

Now, here is a question for your today: what would you like to see Jesus restore for your future?

I have heard this sentiment lots, I would like see "the good old days!" again. Would we like Jesus to restore the dreams we once had of making it big, a big house,

money, a cushy retirement. We would like to see the political parties once in power that brought prosperity to our nation.

You probably have seen through social media how people prefer on political system over others. I have seen how many even Christians prefer the right wing and others the left. And begin to get upset at each other over how this country should be run; or other countries for that matter.

I have read articles as to how some Christians have hijacked the right wing of politics, and declare that to be Christian and right.

You might know and remember of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the Contras. Nicaragua became a Sandinista country, and its army begin to fight the Contras, a righty wing of political professing people who were supported by the US army. At that time the US sponsored army was stationed in Honduras fighting the contras in northern Nicaragua. The US soldiers stationed in Honduras, were pillaging, even abusing women in Honduras and of course in Nicaragua, under the idea of destroying the Sandinistas. At one point Pat Robertson from the 700 Club, came to visit the military based there in Honduras and proclaimed, "this is the army that will deliver the Nicaraguans from the evil Sandinistas." That same year, some prominent priests prayed for the Sandinista army and proclaimed "this is the army that will free Nicaragua from foreign occupation."

As you see dear Friends, political parties, earthly kings and great leaders, cannot and will not make our future better. Cannot restore hope and a great future, because, well where money is involved the integrity of the human being begins to deteriorate. Doesn't matter what political orientation that would be. We have seen it all over the world.

Now, while our Christian responsibility is to pray and take care of our countries, exercise our civil rights aiming the integrity of the human life, our future is solely grounded, should be solely grounded in Christ alone. And that's what our request is that Jesus would restore our hope, true hope, heavenly hope, after all Jesus Kingdom was not from this earth. Pontius Pilate questioned Jesus about his kingdom. Jesus acknowledged that indeed he was a king but that his kingdom was not of this world. Jesus is unlike any other earthly ruler. He is God in human flesh. As the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, the Lord understands this world and humanity better than any mortal. He was made like us in every way, except without sinning (Heb 4:15).

II. Jesus comes to meet us individually. Giving his life upon a cross.

That's the beauty of the true Christian faith, the fact that our King, that Jesus kingdom is from heaven, but that the King comes to earth for you individually. That's how you identify the King, that he comes for you personally, that he comes to seek you, that he comes to restore you into his family, making you his child. That you might have true hope, here on earth! As you see, although the Christian life and the practicality of our faith are to be done in community, restoration and salvation is personal. One a one to one! You matter to God, you as a whole, as a being, integrally. That's what God comes to redeem. That's what the King does for you. The truth is that each one of you matter to God, and his relationship with you individually also matter to God and should matter to each one of us.

That's the truth! Remember that Christ came to bring us hope, individually but not to live out our faith private and secluded. No, he brings us into his family the Church.

But that doesn't please the rest of the world, does it? What do we see out there? All over we see individualism and selfishness, disbelief and misunderstanding.

But none of those things are new, in fact that's what Jesus had to face back then. And more, the world back then had its way with Jesus. They killed him! Although in killing him his true Kingdom was revealed. We can say that Jesus was enthroned there and then.

Jesus was betrayed by a friend under the cover of darkness, while the crowds who welcomed Jesus on Sunday slept. In a hurried manner, Jesus appears before the High Priest, King Herod, and Pontius Pilate in quick succession. Pilate knew Jesus was not guilty of a capital offense, but to please the crowd he gave Jesus over to death. Stripped, whipped, beaten, and adorned with a crown of thorns, Jesus is enthroned on the tree of a cross at Golgotha, the place of the skull. His disciples flee. Mark records that among the women looking on were his mother Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Salome. Yet it was there in the unnatural darkness of midday that Jesus was enthroned as King forever.

Satan and his minions thought they'd won a great victory. The enemies of Jesus rejoiced; but short was their triumph, for Jesus arose on the third day. Sin is overcome. Jesus lives and death is conquered. Forty days later, Jesus ascends to the right hand of the Father, where he continues to rule all things on behalf of his Church. King Jesus is coming back. And he is coming back for each one of us.

Jesus is coming back. The trumpet will sound, the voice of the archangel will be heard. Graves will open, and the dead will rise. King Jesus is returning (1 Thess 4:13–18). Every eye will see him, even those who persecuted him. Everyone will weep on account of him (Rev 1:7). At his name, "every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:10–11). Jesus, who holds the keys of death and of Hades in his hands (Rev 1:18), will welcome home his saints, those who were faithful to the point of death. He will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt 25:34). The Kingdom we've always really needed Jesus to restore. The Kingdom that comes with forgiveness of our sins, including the sins of wishing for a kingdom of our own, especially the kind of kingdom that excludes people with different faces or countries of origin than our own.

Meanwhile we wait by observing another season of Advent. We look back at Jesus' first coming in Bethlehem and give thanks. We see the climax of that first coming with his enthronement upon the cross. We celebrate, yet ponder this awe-filled mystery. The manger and the cross are made of the same wood. Jesus came to die. He came to give his life as a ransom for all (Mt 20:28). Gentleness, humility, and meekness marked his first coming, even as he journeyed to Jerusalem and to the cross. A crucifixion is the last place one would look for an enthronement, but here is Jesus, crucified for you. All your sins were laid upon him. By his wounds, you are healed (Is 53:5). He fulfilled God's Law completely. His death and resurrection ushered in his coming Kingdom.

Now we walk by faith in the Son of God, who loves us and gave himself for us. He remains with us, our Immanuel. His presence is hidden in Word, water, bread, and wine. He takes these ordinary elements and uses them literally to join himself to us. Soon we will see Jesus as he really is. What was hidden will be seen by everyone. His kingdom of

glory will surpass every expectation in its power, splendor, and majesty. King Jesus is coming for you. He comes to take you to be where he is, that you may dwell in the house of the Lord, before his eternal throne, forever. And all of God's people said: Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly. Amen.