

*Palm Sunday -Sixth Sunday in Lent*  
March 28, 2010  
Amazing Grace Lutheran - Pastor Chip Wilke

Zechariah 9:9-10

***Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.***

In 2006 my brother-in-law went to serve our nation by going to war in Iraq. But before he went, with what I believe was at the time the largest group of the national guards ever deployed from Wisconsin, they met at Mitchell Field in Milwaukee for a big send off. Friends, family, and associates all gathered around these soldiers. The governor spoke, the people cheered, children and others were all waving American flags both big and small, and the crowds saluted these men and woman. And why not, after all, they were going for us. They were going to serve and protect even if it might mean laying down their lives.

When I thought about that day, I could not help but think of the similarities to this day we call Palm Sunday. In a way, even if the people did not realize it, Jesus was getting a proper send off. People lined the streets around Jesus. They cheered and shouted. They sang “*Hosanna.*” They threw their cloaks before him and waved their Palm branches. Make no mistake, Jesus was going to war - one in which Jesus was certain to lay down His life.

My prayer today is that we join in with the crowds of that first Palm Sunday. I pray we honor and praise Jesus. I pray we shout for joy at His arrival in Jerusalem. I pray we turn to Jesus and cry “*Hosanna.*” I pray we recognize who Jesus is and exactly what Jesus came to do for us. I pray we trust in Jesus as our Savior and our King. Today, we turn to the prophecy found in Zechariah that clearly points us to this event on the first day of Holy week. May we listen carefully as God, through Zechariah, tells us to: **See, your King comes to you. In a manner unlike any other. With a message unlike any other.**

Our text brings us back to about 500B.C., to the days of Israel where having their own kings had long come to an end. The prophet Zechariah serves the small remnant of Israel which the Lord allowed to return to Jerusalem after their long exile in Babylon. And times were tough. While God’s people have dreams of returning to the days of glory, dreams of rebuilding the great temple, things were not as they had hoped. Israel was anything but a world power, and the heathen enemies around them were far greater and much more powerful. The harsh truth started to settle in for God’s people that they were only a shadow of their former selves and not even the temple would be the same. In fact, because others opposed their rebuilding the temple the people in Jerusalem became very discouraged and stopped rebuilding it.

But “*the Lord remembers,*” which just happens to be the meaning of name of Zechariah. Zechariah is the prophet sent by the Lord to comfort the people and remind them the Lord is faithful. The Lord has not forgotten about them in their distress. Zechariah tells

these people who no longer have a king, that their King is on the way. ***“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you.”***

Literally, Zechariah tells the people to “*jump for joy*” and “*to shout aloud*” for they will have a King come for them. This King will be the promised Messiah.

Now, in what way would we anticipate this powerful promised King to arrive? How might we expect such a King to make His triumphal entrance into the Holy city? The description of His coming is somewhat surprising. ***“See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*** This King will come gently. Literally, He will come as a “lowly one.” There will be no chariots, no security, no army, no entourage of body guards. Instead, He will come riding on a donkey, on a lowly colt, the foal of a donkey.

Dear friends, is this not the King we see today coming into Jerusalem? On Paul Sunday Jesus fulfills this prophecy spoken through Zechariah. Jesus comes in this lowly, gentle way to the shouts and cries of the people. By Jesus side is no army or chariots but just a small band of disciples, many of them mere Galilean fishermen at that! Jesus arrives as the promised King, lowly and gentle and riding on a donkey. Our King comes as promised and arrives in a manner unlike any other.

While the crowds shout and cheer and sing and praise Jesus as He enters into Jerusalem, we know that welcome was short lived. Too many people did not want their King to come in such a lowly manner. They wanted to witness displays of power. They longed for a miraculous return to physical glory. They wanted a leader to bring them freedom from the Romans and give them a better life on earth. They wanted Jesus to be their bread king and return Israel to a national power. When it became clear Jesus was not this kind of King, the praise soon changed to jeers, and the “*Hosannas*” turned into shouts of “*crucify,*” “*crucify.*”

Do we ever fall into the same foolish thinking? What do we want from Jesus as our King? Do we care more about the temporary, the physical, the earthly blessings that our King might provide and miss out on the greater blessings? Do we ever wonder why Jesus comes in such a lowly manner? Does the quiet lowly manner in the way He comes to us such as in His Word or in simply water, bread or wine connected to His Word, ever leave us longing for something different? Do we want to see God’s power more evident in our lives here on earth? Do the hardships and sufferings that we face as God’s children ever lead us to doubt or disprove of our King? Our doubts, our dissatisfaction with our King, our mislead and misguided focus and love for earthly things are all sins that add to the cries of “*crucify,*” “*crucify.*” Our sins too were the nails that pierced Him and the reason for His wounds.

My prayer is that you see your King comes to you and that you recognize why Jesus arrives in such a manner lowly manner. He comes ***“righteous and having salvation.”*** Not only is this King just in His judgments and righteous in the eyes of God, but He came to earn a perfect righteousness for all mankind. That is why this lowly King humbly was born under law - to live a perfect life for all. He came ***“having salvation”*** or more literally the word says as ***“one delivered.”*** He depended on God to help him. That is why this lowly King would willingly take the sins of the world upon Himself and go willingly to His death. Even as God punished Jesus beyond our imagination, even though the Father forsook His

Son for a time of the cross, even as Jesus breathed His last, our King trusted in God to deliver Him. On the third that trust proved not to be in vain.

Now our King is no longer a lowly one. Now our King has a message unlike any other - for you and me and the world! ***“I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.”*** This King brings blessings far greater than any king of Israel ever did. He established a kingdom that has no borders. He established a kingdom that has no end. We have the picture here of this King removing all weapons of war. By His perfect life, innocent death, and triumphant resurrection Jesus defeated all our enemies. Sin and Satan no longer control us. Death will not hold us. This is the message of our King: ***“He will proclaim peace to the nations.”***

By His lowliness, by His willingness to wear a crown of thorns instead of gold, by his willingness to be obedient to death - even death of the cross, by the punishment that was placed upon Him our King has brought us peace. You and I are at peace with a Holy God. Sinners like you and me now call God our Father. Through His Word of peace, we have been brought by faith into His kingdom where we now get to serve Him in righteousness, innocence and blessedness. We look forward to the riches of a glorious kingdom that will have no end. Until that day, we have the awesome privilege of proclaiming this message of peace - a message unlike any other - a message of forgiveness and salvation through our King.

I think back to that send off the crowds gave to my brother-in-law and the other soldiers who went to war for us. Emotions were high as no one knew if they would all return. I am thankful that the vast majority of them, including my bother-in-law, are now back home safely. I am also thankful for the sacrifice they made by putting their lives on the line to protect us. So what is our response on this first day of Holy week - a day emotions are also running high? I pray that we jump for joy and shout aloud. Send Jesus properly on His way as we look to celebrate what He has done for us. For Jesus came to win the war for us. He came knowing to do it He would lay down His life as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Follow Jesus this week to the cross and empty tomb and we will see that not a single one of our Hosannas are in vain. See your King comes to you. In a manner unlike any other. With a message unlike any other. ***“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”*** Amen.

