

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!”

On this Palm Sunday we have many reasons to be thankful. We are gathered here to start the holiest part of the Church year, Holy Week, where we follow in Jesus’ footsteps into Jerusalem into the temple, the upper room, to the cross, and to the empty tomb. As Jesus enters Jerusalem, I say to you, rejoice!

3. Rejoice because your king comes humbly. Zechariah writes, **“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”**

In our day and age, we want things that are big, bold, and bombastic. We want to go to the big game and see the stars. We want a photo with the Oscar-winning movie star. We want the luxury car with all the perks. Why would we rejoice at the humility of this king?

This king is humble so He can approach us. Think of the hoops you’d have to jump through to get dinner with a movie star. Those things would be nigh impossible! Maybe some of us have done things like that. We waited in line for hours for a photograph with a celebrity. We went through a dozen security checks to get an audience with a politician. We sent dozens of emails to talk to the company C.E.O.

But not so Jesus. He is a man of the people. All throughout the Gospels, Jesus often has to wade through crowds to get to new destinations. We see no exception here: **“The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!””**

Jesus is the humble king who approaches us. Jesus gives us the V.I.P. treatment. He’s the one waiting in line. He’s the one going sending the emails. He’s the one jumping through the hoops to get access to you! He’s available any day of the week, any time of the day. Simply give him a ring by calling out to Him in prayer. Listen to Him through His word. Come to worship and sit as His feet.

Jesus says to you, **“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”** Contrary to popular belief, Jesus is talking to believers in this passage. We open the door to Jesus as we hear His Word, as we call upon Him in prayer, and as we gather for worship. Thank you for making time this morning to be here in worship. Your humble king appreciates it! As you are strengthened week after week by Jesus this humble king, rejoice!

2. Rejoice because your king brings peace. **“I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut**

off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”

In Zechariah’s time, this would be an unimaginable picture. War was always on the horizon as the Israelites were gearing up for the next battle. The history of the Ancient Near East is one of superpower after superpower sweeping across the Middle East and conquering everything in sight.

Even so today, peace is a far-off proposition. At any given moment in our globe there are more than a dozen wars taking place. In our own communities and neighborhoods there is violence and strife. Even in the Church Satan sows the seeds of discord.

But this king achieves peace. The king does this by destroying the chariots and the war horses—those were the equivalents of modern-day tanks and attack helicopters. He cuts off the battle bow—the equivalent of modern-day cruise missiles.

This king achieves peace. Not a peace achieved by the tip of the sword, but a peace achieved through victory over sin, death, and the devil. As we see Jesus ride into Jerusalem, He rides in for peace. This is the peace through sins forgiven. This is the peace given through Jesus reconciling us to the Father.

Wouldn’t it be nice to have that peace? Beyond violence and strife in our world and in our neighborhoods, peace on the inside? Peace in our homes: freedom from arguments and passive aggressive comments. Peace in our hearts. Wouldn’t it be nice to have freedom from those anxious thoughts that keep you up at night, freedom from those fears that alarm you?

This is why Jesus rode into Jerusalem, to die for you and to pay the price for your sins that you have the Father’s audience. Jesus went all the way to restore your relationship with God. Today, this humble king stands at the door and knocks because He wants to deliver you that peace. Today, that peace is delivered to you.

Rejoice. In Christ, your future is secure. He has prepared a place for you. Rejoice. In Christ, you are not the sum of your failures and fears, but you are the sum of the Father’s love for you because you are made into the image of His Son. Rejoice. In Christ, you have a place in God’s family so that arguments, biting comments, and insults are not all that it means to be part of a family. Rejoice. In Christ, you may cast all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.

1. Rejoice, because your king does it all by the blood of the covenant. “As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.”

Rejoice, Jesus does all this by the blood of the covenant. Sometimes in church we just hear these words and we become numb to them. We smile and nod and say, “Of course, pastor!”

A covenant is a promise. It is a promise that God makes to mankind. The covenant of blood is the promise that is sealed in blood. In the Old Testament Moses sprinkled the blood of oxen upon the people and the people promised to follow the rules and statutes of the Lord.

Thus, year after year, month after month, the Israelites would sacrifice livestock: doves, goats, and oxen. The blood of those animals would be the continued sign that God has made a promise to them, to be their Lord and Savior, to be their God and defender. Because of the blood of that covenant, the Lord promised to set the prisoners free and restore them double.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem to establish a new covenant of blood. On Maundy Thursday, He took a cup of wine and said, “**This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.**” Through His suffering, death, and burial, Jesus established a new covenant. God made a new promise, and through the suffering of Jesus this blood of the covenant was sacrificed once for all. This promise is delivered to you in the Lord’s Supper every time we have communion.

This humble king achieves peace for you, not by a show of force or a military conquest, but by allowing Himself to be brought low, even to the point of death. This humble king achieves peace through being humiliated, tortured, and crucified for you.

Through His blood of the covenant, you, the prisoner, are set free. Through His blood of the covenant, your sins are forgiven for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Through His blood of the covenant, you are given double in exchange for all your sufferings in this life. You have heaven waiting for you.

Join us this week for our Holy Week services as we follow the path of Jesus and His blood of the covenant, and think about what all this humble king has done to free you from your sins, anxieties, and sorrows. And REJOICE BECAUSE THE HUMBLE KING MAKES PEACE BY HIS BLOOD. Amen!