

Ad te levavi
St. Matthew 21:1-9
December 3rd, 2017
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church
Greenville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Blessed Is He Who Comes

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today we enter the season of Advent. Over the next few Sundays our focus will turn toward the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. During this time, we will prepare for our Lord's coming to us in the flesh. You will hear the catchy phrase often during this time, "+ Jesus is the reason for the season." However, + Jesus is NOT the reason for the season. At least not in the sense that Christmas is about the man + Jesus being born. As if He is just another human. No, Christmas is about God taking on our flesh. The reason for the season is the Incarnation of our Lord + Jesus—God coming to us in the form of the man + Jesus. During Advent we are preparing for our Lord God to dwell with us; to take on our flesh, in order that He might deliver us from sin and death. This is why is wrong to say that Christmas is the birthday of + Jesus, as if He is getting another year older. No, we celebrate the birth of our Lord + Jesus; the birth of our Lord God in our flesh. This is what Christmas is all about: the Lord God coming to dwell with us in our flesh. And this is what we prepare for during this season of Advent.

This is also why we have this Gospel from the Evangelist St. Matthew, which would seem to be better suited to the season of Lent. In fact, this is the only Gospel of the entire Church's year that is repeated. That is how important it is for us. Today, as we begin our preparation for our Lord God's bodily dwelling in the flesh of our Lord + Jesus; as we prepare for His coming to us in our flesh, we hear of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem as He makes His way to the cross to redeem us from sin, death and the power of the devil. Our Lord + Jesus comes to us to suffer and die in our place. The baby to born in Bethlehem in a few short weeks, is born to suffer and die for us. The Lord God comes bearing our flesh, so that He fulfill the Law which we cannot keep; the Law which we break daily; the Law which demands perfect obedience, or else eternal death and damnation.

The Lord God comes to us in the form of the man + Jesus. Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord! Blessed is He Who comes to us bearing our flesh. Blessed is He Who comes to fulfill the Law of God for us. Blessed is He Who comes to suffer and die the punishment that we deserve. Blessed is He Who comes to redeem us and shower us with His gifts of forgiveness and life. Blessed is He Who desires to dwell with you and be your brother.

The One Who comes, Who is deserving of every blessing is the Son of David, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ. The One Who clothed you with His righteousness in the waters of Holy Baptism. The One Who washed you clean of your sins, and made you an heir with Him of the heavenly realms. This is the Lord Who we worship. This is the Lord Who comes to us, not only as the baby +

Jesus Who grew up to suffer and die for us, but also comes to us whenever two or three of us are gathered together in His Name. In other words, He has come to today. He is here with us. We are in the presence of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. And He hands out His gifts of forgiveness and life to us through His Word and Sacraments. He is preached into your ears from this pulpit. You are reminded of your Holy Baptism throughout the service, but especially at the beginning with the words, "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." We are reminded throughout the service that our Lord + Jesus has come to us and washed us clean of our sins, whenever we make the sign of the holy cross. This is why we should make the sign of the cross often, both throughout the service and in our daily lives; to remind ourselves that our Lord + Jesus came to dwell with us, and still dwells with us in His Word and Sacraments. We are even going to receive our Lord as He comes to us in His very Body and very Blood given to us in bread and wine.

Our Lord will also come to us on the Last Day, when He will take all those who believe on Him and cling to Him in faith to their eternal reward in Heaven. He will come to us with the blast of the trumpet and all the angels will surround His throne and sing of His great deeds, as the saints in Heaven and those on Earth join in the eternal liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom. He came to this Earth with little to no fanfare. Only a proclamation to some shepherds who abided with their flocks by night. But when He comes again, the roof of the world will be blown off with the blast of the trumpet, and all the dead will arise, and those who believe on Him will go to live with Him in Heaven. And all those who rejected Him during their lives will go to eternal suffering and punishment in Hell.

This is why we gather for worship often, to hear the message of salvation over and over again. For, our sin-soaked ears are hard of hearing. They must continuously be flushed with the promises of the Gospel. We must continuously have our ears filled with the good things that our Lord and Savior has done for us, and hear over and over again what poor, miserable sinners we truly are, lest we begin to trust in our works, and think that we can find salvation apart from our Savior. Our Lord must continuously keep coming to us.

He has to keep coming to us in His Word and in His Sacraments. He needs to continuously remind us that He is the Lord God Who has come to us in our flesh. He did not come to be just a man, and be treated like a man, as if He was just some other teacher or prophet; as if there was nothing more remarkable about Him than any other man. He came to be the God man. He came to bear our flesh; to dwell among His creation as part of His creation, in order that He might rescue you from the power sin and death.

The crowds who welcomed into Jerusalem understood Who He was. He was the Son of David. He was the Messiah. He was the One Who came from the Lord to rescue them. And so they cut down branches from palm and olive trees and took off their coats and placed them before Him, for they knew He was worthy of such honor. However, they did not understand, as of yet, the true purpose for which He came. They did not understand the form of rescue that He was about to perform for them. They sought someone to rescue them from the oppression of the Romans. But, they had a greater enemy. They were oppressed by the devil, the world, and their own sinful flesh, just as we are. He came to rescue them from their real oppressor. He came to rescue us from our real oppressors.

This is why we sing our Lord's praise, just as the crowds of Jerusalem did that day. We sing of how we shall meet our Lord. We sing of the Savior of all the Nations coming to us—His Bride. We rejoice that He has come to His Church—to us—His Bride. For, since He has come, and fulfilled the Law perfectly for us, and suffered our punishment, He now opens for us the gates of Heaven. And just as He triumphantly entered Jerusalem, we now triumphantly enter into Heaven with all the saints.

+ Jesus is NOT the reason for the season. The INCARNATE Lord + Jesus is the reason for the season. God comes to us to dwell with us, so that we might dwell with Him for all eternity. In a few

weeks we will NOT celebrate the birthday of + Jesus. We will celebrate the birth of God in the flesh of the Lord + Jesus. Our Lord God desires to dwell with us and rescue us from our enemies. Let us therefore cling to Him in faith, and believe that He has indeed rescued us from our enemies, and made us His brothers and sisters and co-heirs of all the rewards of Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.