

Palmarum
St. Matthew 21:1-9
March 21st, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

All This Was Done That It Might Be Fulfilled

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.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ enters Jerusalem triumphantly. He is hailed as a King. The crowds lay down their cloaks and spread palm and olive branches before Him. It was similar to how the Roman Caesars would return from their conquests in victory. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem was a victory parade for our Lord. But, it was also a humble parade. No extravagantly adorned horses, or the beasts and conquered people of foreign lands that accompanied the Caesars of Rome in their victory parades were seen in our Lord's entry into Jerusalem. He rides into Jerusalem, lowly, humbly on a donkey, the colt the foal of a donkey.

All this was foretold by the prophets. Our Old Testament Lesson from the Prophet Zechariah (which is also quoted by the Evangelist St. Matthew) proves this to be true. The exact thing that the Prophet Zechariah foretold is happening in our Gospel today. Truly this was the Son of David. The people had seen His works for three years. No other prophet could do the things that He did. He cast out demons, He healed the sick and lame and lepers. He gave sight to the blind. He opened the ears of the deaf. He even raised the dead back to life. Truly this was the Son of David—the Messiah long-promised of old.

We've seen some of the prophecies ourselves in our study of Old Testament history. The promise was given to Adam and Eve, to Noah, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and his sons. The promise will be made to Moses and the Judges and to King David and his sons. The promise that a Redeemer would come from the lineage of King David to buy back from sin, death and the power of the devil all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve who were cursed because their first parents were deceived by a serpent and ate a piece of fruit that they were forbidden to eat. And so, sin spread to all mankind; to the crowds of Jerusalem and to us.

Therefore, our Lord + Jesus Christ came down from Heaven and took upon Himself our flesh, He grew in both stature and in favor of both God and man. He learned the Scriptures and marveled the leaders of the temple at the young age of twelve. He was baptized by St. John the Baptist, and therefore cleansed all water for use in Holy Baptism, so that we might be washed clean of our sins, through the washing that we received in our Holy Baptism. He gathered twelve apostles who would carry on His Ministry, and who witnessed the miracles and wonders and works that He did throughout His three-year Ministry.

So, the people were happy on this day. It felt like the victory parade would lead to the coronation of a new King; a King that would reign over Israel and bring them back to the type of kingdom that they enjoyed under King David and King Solomon.

Our Lord, however, did not come for this cause. He did not come to be the type of King that they were hoping for—an earthly king. Our Lord + Jesus came to be an eternal king, Who rescued His people from their sin and rebellion. Therefore, our Lord, as He is being hailed by the crowds on His way into the city of Jerusalem is weeping, as the Evangelist St. Luke writes in his Gospel. He weeps for the destruction that will come upon this great city because of its sin and rebellion. We see glimpses of this in the response of the religious leaders, where they chastise our Lord + Jesus for not rebuking the crowds for praising Him. Our Lord simply tells them, “If these did not cry out, the rocks themselves would cry out in praise.”

These religious leaders would seek every opportunity during this preparation week for the Passover to destroy the Lord. They are unable to do it through trickery with their words, when our Lord + Jesus silences both the Pharisees and Sadducees in questions regarding taxes and marriage. His answers led them to ask Him no more questions. They were not able to find an opportunity to put Him to death until Judas Iscariot, shamed for being chastised by our Lord for complaining about the woman anointing Jesus’ feet with costly oil of spikenard, goes to the Jews and asks what price they would be willing to pay for his betrayal. Thirty pieces of silver leads to our Lord’s betrayal, trial and death.

He would suffer and die for the sins of all mankind—for our sins—the sins we inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve. We have also surely added to that original sin, through our corrupt thoughts, words and deeds. We daily sin much. We daily need to turn to the mercy seat of Christ—to His cross and Passion on our behalf. There on the cross our sins were paid for in full. We cling to that promise of our Lord in earnest faith.

This is why we bow our heads whenever the Name of + Jesus is spoken. Certainly, we should bow our heads in reverence to Him because He is our Lord and Savior. But, even more so, we bow our heads at the Name of + Jesus on account of the suffering that He endured on our behalf. He suffered the punishment that we deserve. He endured the mockery, the scourging, the whipping and crucifixion, which we deserve. We deserve the death He died. But, He endured the Passion and death for us out of His great love for us. So we humbly bow our heads when He is mentioned by Name, just as St. Paul writes to the Church at Philippi, because He humbled Himself even to the point of the cross and death for us. When we hear His Name and bow our heads, we are remembering His sacrifice for us; we are remembering that our sins crucified our Savior. Therefore, He is truly worthy of our honor—our bowing, kneeling, genuflecting—for He redeemed us with His Blood.

Today, our Lord + Jesus Christ rides triumphantly, but lowly and humbly, into Jerusalem, just as it was foretold. It is a cause for celebration. We even joined our voices with the voices of the crowds as we did a small reenactment of this triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We carry our palm branches just as the crowds did that day and laid them before the Lord. We joined with countless Christians before us, and they have reenacted this entry for centuries. It truly is a cause for celebration that our Lord + Jesus has come to the place where He will win for us forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.

However, the joy of this procession, and the joy of this day cannot last. We already have seen a glimpse of this when we heard our Lord’s Passion from the Gospel of St. Matthew. We heard of His betrayal, trial, crucifixion and death. All this was for us. But all of this was because of us and our sin. We deserve what He endured.

But thanks be to God! For He gladly and willingly goes to the tree of the holy cross for you. He gladly and willingly takes on our flesh. He gladly and willingly fulfills the Law for us. He gladly and willingly sacrifices His life for yours. All because He loves you that much. He does whatever it takes to rescue from sin, death and the power of the devil. Such is His love for you.

So then, we can join our voices to the voices of the crowds outside of Jerusalem and shout out, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!" For, He has redeemed us from sin, death and the power of the devil, and won for us forgiveness, life and salvation, just as He foretold. Praise be to the holy Name of + Jesus. 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.

Soli Deo gloria!