

Written Copy: Matthew 21:8-11 “The King Who Brings Peace”

First Sunday in Advent
Sunday, November 27th, 2022

Text: Matthew 21:8-11

⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹ And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

The text's intent

Jesus comes to Jerusalem not just to celebrate Passover but to demonstrate to His disciples His divine foreknowledge and authority in the procuring of a donkey and a colt. With these He purposely changes His mode of transportation in order to fulfill the Messianic prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 proclaiming Himself to be the King who comes in gentle humble strength riding on a beast of burden. He comes to serve as the King who is the Lamb of Sacrifice to save His people. The people react following the disciples lead by laying down cloaks and tree branches to pave the way in honor His coming; They quote the Messianic Psalm 118 crying out Hosana which means "Save us O Lord" and at the same time referencing Him with the Messianic title "Son of David". When He enters the city, its residents are agitated, the same reaction the city had when the Magi came to look for Him at His birth, wondering who He is. While they crowd that has come with Jesus seems to have an understanding of Him as the Messiah, they answer the city's question telling them He is the prophet from Nazareth. While the prophecy being fulfilled that points to Him being the Messianic King come to save, the people can only see Him as the Messiah they want Him to be.

Focus Statement:

Jesus came as the King of Kings riding into Jerusalem not to conquer and kill but to serve as the Lamb of Sacrifice and so defeat the enemies of all mankind: sin, death, and the devil. He comes now hidden in His Gospel to conquer our sinful hearts and win us into His reign and rule, establishing His peace that goes beyond understanding. And He will come again to full establish the kingdom of peace in eternal life that fulfills Isaiah 2:4

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

The Jews welcoming Jesus were looking for the King who would ride in and establish an earthly kingdom that ruled over all others and fulfilled immediately the prophecy in Isaiah 2. We can look at Jesus as coming to establish His kingdom now when and where we desire it and lose sight of the kingdom to come.

What the hearer should do as a result:

Through sharing His unselfish love with our fellow man work at establishing His peace now among and share His Gospel Message of both of His Advents.

Subject Sentence: The King who came to establish the kingdom of peace

Introduction

Well Thanksgiving Day is over and done with. That means this past Friday was Black Friday, the official start of the Christmas shopping extravaganza. How many of you went out and took advantage of the supposed fantastic deals that were available? Anybody get up at the crack of dawn and wait outside for stores to open? (Does anyone still do that?) Was it worth it? That makes tomorrow Cyber Monday when allegedly you can find fantastic deals online. How many of you plan on taking advantage of that?

No matter when you plan on doing your shopping the question of the hour becomes “What do you want for Christmas?” I imagine if we were to go around the Sanctuary and ask each person present what they wanted we would get a great variety of answers. Perhaps maybe the most common one, the one that is most frustrating for those of us who are going out to shop is “I don’t know”. That by the way that has been an answer of mine sometimes.

I wonder how many of you would ask for peace on earth? It would be a very altruistic request, the kind of thing that would make you look good in the company of others. But it’s not the kind of gift we would seriously ask for, knowing that there isn’t anyone on this earth that can seriously deliver it. In one of my favorite TV shows of yesteryear, the X-files, there is an episode where FBI agent Fox Mulder, who investigates paranormal unsolved cases, runs across a real-life genie. Having three wishes he thinks hard on his first one, and then asks for “Peace on earth.” And he gets it. The problem is how he gets it; he is the only one left alive on earth while everyone else disappears.

God is the only one who can truly deliver peace on earth as a Christmas gift. And that is exactly what He has given us in the gift of His Son, whose Advent (or coming) we gather to celebrate. And peace is the gift that the Jewish people in our Gospel Lesson are looking for...sort of. They are looking for the Messiah who comes to bring peace, only the peace He brings and the manner in which He will establish it are not what they are looking for or expecting.

The King of Peace Riding Into Jerusalem

First off, in our Gospel Lesson, Jesus shows His disciples and us that He is someone capable of delivering such a tall order. He shows us this as our text opens when He gives instructions to the two disciples as to how they should procure a ride for Him to go down the slope from the Mount of Olives and into Jerusalem. He doesn't just tell them to go into the city and look around for a likely available animal or go to the used animal lot. He gives them unbelievably specific instructions: when they first enter the village, they will immediately find a donkey and her colt tied up. They are to walk right over and untie them. When they are questioned as to what they are doing, all they need say is that Jesus needs them, and it will be alright. And that's exactly how it all goes down. Jesus shows that He not only has divine foreknowledge but has the power of God to arrange all things for His own purposes. And He has the power to delegate that authority to His disciples so that it all happens according to plan.

But the question is, why is Jesus changing His mode of transport now? He's been walking all the way from Galilee. He is now only about 2 miles outside of Jerusalem. Because He's going to ride into Jerusalem on the colt, one that has never been ridden before, with its' mother at its side, to fulfill the Old Testament Messianic prophecy from **Zechariah 9:9 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**. He wants those walking in front of Him and following behind Him to see that He has come to be this righteous King. He is the One who is in right standing with the Father, who has come to bring salvation to His people.

And they seem to get it, they are proclaiming Him to be that long awaited one, the gift of God promised long ago, as they chant from the Messianic Psalm 118 in **Matthew 21:9b "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"** Hosanna is Hebrew Word meaning "Save us now." "Son of David" is a Messianic term that was pointed right at the One riding in on the colt. He is the One who, not too many days earlier, was loudly proclaimed to be "The Son of David" by two blind beggars in Jericho. This crowd is proclaiming that Jesus is this is Messiah who has come to bring us salvation. Yet we know that in 5 short days their cry will turn from "Save us Son of David" to "Crucify Him". What caused the change?

Their change in attitude came because of the kind of salvation they have in mind. The festival that all these people are heading to Jerusalem to celebrate is Passover. It's the great festival that celebrates the LORD saving Israel from slavery in Egypt. And what are these Jewish people looking to be saved from now? Well, the Romans to start with. They are looking for the Messiah King who will ride in and establish what Isaiah prophecies for Jerusalem in our Old Testament Lesson. They are looking for the mountain that Jerusalem sits on, Mount Zion to be established as the highest mountain, the place all other nations looked to and humble themselves before because the Messiah King rules there.

They are looking for the King who will fulfill **Isaiah 2:4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.** They are looking for Jesus to be the king who will rule from Jerusalem and establish a peace that would be greater than any Israelite King before. A peace that makes war a thing of the past. And Jesus will do that, just not in the way and manner they envision.

The Peace King Jesus Comes to Bring: Between God and Man

Jesus is the Messianic King who comes to bring peace. But He does not ride in as a conquering King the Jews are desiring, upon a valiant white horse, with sword drawn, coming to avenge His people and free them from Rome. He rides in on a beast of burden. He comes not in pomp and circumstance, despite the reaction of the crowd, but in humbleness, in quiet reserved strength. He does come to conquer, but the enemies He will take on are far worse than the Romans or other surrounding nations. He comes as the King who will save His people, and the rest of humanity, from their greatest enemies. He will do so by serving all as their Lamb of Sacrifice.

And the place of battle will be on a cross. And it is there that the King of the Universe will perform His greatest saving act, greater than the redeeming of Israel from slavery in Egypt. His sacrifice on the cross will redeem all mankind from slavery to sin, death, and the devil. There on the cross He took your sin and removed it from your permanent record forever. With all your sin atoned for there is nothing left that the devil can accuse you of and claim you as his own for. And with no more sin to suffer for, you will no longer be sentenced on the Last Day to eternal death apart from God forever. Instead, Jesus in His death and resurrection has established peace with God that begins now and stretches throughout your life on earth, kept alive and active by the Holy Spirit through the gift of faith.

The Peace that King Jesus Will Return to Bring

But what of this eternal peace between all nations that Isaiah prophesied about? It is the gift that our Messiah King will bring and establish fully when He returns for His final Advent on the Last Day. When He returns it will be as the mighty King of the Universe, appearing in all His glory just as that King riding in on a beautiful white horse and the mighty conqueror of all His people's enemies.

On that Last Day, Judgment Day, Isaiah's prophetic word will be fully realized **Isaiah 2:4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.**

He will remove all sources of evil and hate and war. There will be no more need for instruments of war. Instead of swords and instruments of war we will use instruments of peaceful agriculture: plowshares and pruning hooks. No more will men fight against men or nations wage war against nation.; We will be busy and happily taking care of the beautiful Garden of Eden restored, and we will be living in the presence of our Mighty King who is also our loving Savior. He is the One who came to provide us with this eternal peace as His free gift of grace.

And what will be the reason that you and I can live in such peace? The love of Christ will invade and control our hearts completely. As Paul says in our Epistle Lesson **Romans 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.** That selfless sacrificial love will be how we relate to one another every day for the rest of eternity. We will be happily putting the desires of King Jesus first, which is loving our neighbor as ourself, just as He loves them, just as He loves us: sacrificially and unconditionally. On the Last Day when Jesus glorifies us, giving us our new bodies and new souls, we will be completely filled with this love, and our selfish love and selfish hearts will be gone forever.

Conclusion

There are many different kinds of gifts that we can ask for at Christmas. But by far the greatest thing we can ask and pray for is peace on earth. You can know and believe by faith that the Messianic King who rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday will return to make that peace the complete reality of the new heaven and new earth.

But He doesn't leave you hanging now until that day comes. He comes to you this day to give to you and to me that peace that we have with the Him right now through His gift of faith. That's because as faith applies His work of forgiveness to your account and your life it gives you peace right now with the Father. And that faith which is created and sustained by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel Message creates and sustains peace with one another. It brings to you the love of Christ that you will have in full on the Last Day. And its already at work in you now, influencing your relationship with your fellow man. The Spirit is at work through that love to move you to love your neighbor as yourself. Our job as the Church is to be the ones who deliver that love and peace into the hearts and minds of others through our sharing the Gospel Message in word and action, spurred on by that love of Jesus' He shared with us. No matter what presents you buy for others for Christmas, include the Gospel, so that King Jesus can establish that peace He came to bring in their heart and mind now, and keep them in steadfast faith until the eternal peace to come. Amen.