

Sermon Text: Zechariah 9:9-10
Theme: See, Your King Comes to You!

What do you like about a parade? Maybe you like the marching bands or the floats. Maybe you would say that you like the candy that you sometimes get during a parade. Even still today, one of my favorite parts of a parade is right at the beginning, as the emergency vehicles drive past with their lights going and, if it times out just right, they even turn on the sirens right in front of you. Parades are an enjoyable event for most of us.

Today, we begin Holy Week with a “parade.” Please don’t misunderstand me. When I refer to the events of that first Palm Sunday as a “parade”, I am not trying to minimize its importance. So, why is it so important? Why is Palm Sunday important to you and me today? From God’s Word, we will answer that question based on our First Lesson from Zechariah chapter 9. As we do **SEE YOUR KING COMES TO YOU.**

The Lord’s prophet Zechariah worked during a very difficult time in the history of the Children of Israel. Those who had been living in captivity in Babylon returned to the Promised Land. When they returned, they began their rebuilding efforts. But, their spirits were down. They lived in fear of their enemies who didn’t welcome their return. They were looking for someone to rise up as a military leader and bring peace to the area.

In this section of Zechariah’s prophecy the Lord promises to give the people the King they needed. But, it would not be the kind of king they were looking for. The Lord’s good news for his people is this: “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!” Like a crowd in a stadium when their team wins a big game, the Lord says to his people to jump up and down in great joy and shout as loud as they are able to shout.

Why? Why have this kind of joy? As the Lord says, “See, your king comes to you...” The people would have their King. However, unlike an earthly king, this promised King would come “righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” This may not have been the kind of entrance the people had painted in their minds of their king. Yes, their king would come, but not on the back of a great war-horse. He would not come to them in a decorated chariot, escorted by thousands of soldiers. Rather, the king they needed would come in great humility on the back of a young donkey.

In his account of the events of Palm Sunday, the Gospel writer Matthew tells us that Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem that day was so much more than just a parade. It was a direct fulfillment of this prophecy found in Zechariah, chapter 9. So, as you and I celebrate on this Palm Sunday, our hearts are to be filled with joy. But, as you

and I look around at our sin-stained world, as you and I feel the effects of sin in our own lives, you and I may not feel very joyful. You and I may not feel like shouting for joy. Instead, you and I quite often allow the troubles and difficulties of this sinful world to rob us of any joy.

However, this portion of God's Word does encourage you and me to have hearts that are filled with joy. You and I are to shout out in praise to our Savior-King. Why? Because in his great underserved love, our Savior-King comes to you and me. Through the power of his Word, our King comes to us and makes you and me children of our Father in heaven. Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son, willingly humbled himself to live, suffer and die in our place. The words of our Second Lesson come to mind, where Paul writes to the Philippians that Jesus our King willingly "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!"

To place you and me in a right relationship with the one and only true God, Jesus Christ came and he humbly paid the price demanded for all sin. It is only through Jesus Christ, and the free forgiveness of all sins which he won for us, that you and I are able to be sure of our place in heaven. On the great last day, when Jesus comes again, when he comes again not in humility but in all his power and glory, then with our own eyes you and I will see our Savior. With this thought in mind, you and I can't help but think of the words of Job when he writes, "I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me."

As I mentioned earlier, the people who returned from the exile didn't have much peace. They were living in constant fear of their enemies. They woke up each morning not knowing if that would be their last morning. To those who were living in constant fear, the Lord proclaims a message of peace: "I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken." Ephraim was at the northern end of the Promised Land, while Jerusalem was in the south. What the Lord is telling his people is that the Savior-King would bring peace to all those living throughout the Promise Land.

But his peace would extend even farther: "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." The peace offered by the promised Savior-King would not be limited to just one small area or one small group of people. It is a peace offered to all.

Some understand these words to be referring to a peace among the nations of this earth, just like the Jewish people who themselves were looking for a political king, who would bring peace to their land.

But we know from the rest of the Bible that the peace brought by the Savior-King is not a political, worldly peace. Instead, it is a peace between God and sinful mankind. As we read Colossians chapter 1, “For God was please to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things...by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

God’s Word makes it clear that on our own, that by nature, you and I are not in a peaceful relationship with the one true God. The Bible tells us that the sinful mind is hostile to God. There is a war taking place between sinful mankind and the holy, just God.

Yet, the Good News of the Gospel is that there is peace between us and our God. Not that you and I have earned that peace or won it for ourselves. It is a peace that was won for you and me by our Savior-King, Jesus Christ. When Jesus willingly went to the cross on Good Friday, he paid the price demanded for all sin of all time. Jesus won your peace. Jesus won your forgiveness. As Jesus himself says in John chapter 14, “Peace I leave you; my peace I give you.” And Paul, picking up on these words of our Savior, writes in chapter 5 of his letter to the Romans, “Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”

In this verse from Romans chapter 5, we are also told how that peace the Savior-King won becomes our very own. It is only through the gift of faith. Faith is the God-given hand that reaches out and makes the peace which our Lord and King won our very own gift to enjoy.

You and I have peace, confident that all our sins are forgiven through our King, Jesus Christ. You and I have peace while living out our days on this earth, knowing that we are not alone, but that our almighty King is watching over us day after day. You and I have peace, knowing that one day we will live forever at our Savior’s side in the perfect peace of heaven.

Much more important than any parade we may enjoy here in Lake Country, Palm Sunday begins this week in the Christian Church year we call “Holy Week.” I invite all of you to join us for all our special worship services this coming Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Take time during this coming week, not just here in Church, but privately as well, to see your King comes to you. Set aside time this week to offer your thanks and praise to your Savior for his great, undeserved love for you; love which moved him to humble himself to win eternal peace for you. Amen.