

FEAST OF PALM SUNDAY 3/24/18

Mt. Calvary, West View/Pentecost, Avella

ZECHARIAH 9:9-12, PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11, MARK 11: 1-10

Theme: The Beginning of the End

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

Our Text is taken from the Gospel of St. Mark, the 11th chapter:

And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"

What a happy day! Here we are celebrating the great entry of our Lord into the City of Jerusalem, and here we see hundreds, dare I say thousands, of worshipers lining the streets, singing praises to our God and Savior for His salvation coming to us! This is a good thing, however there was a time when Jesus entered our world, and He was not so well received. He came to Bethlehem, Judea, and all this pomp and circumstance was not bestowed upon our God. Instead of thousands, there was a paltry handful. The masses paid no heed to the entrance of the Savior, but that was then, this is now! We will not be pessimists this day but rejoice with our palms as did the people in our text and celebrate the coming King of kings!

So, we worship our Lord, with Loud Hosannas to our King! After all, would not the Great King of kings and Lord of lords enter *any* city with such praises? If Jesus were to come through the Fort Pitt Tunnel, and burst upon the scene of Point State Park and all the mighty skyscrapers, would He not be met with Loud shouts of Hosannas? Riding on a colt, on I-376? Oh, the masses will shout something! It won't be hosannas I will tell you that! We also have another problem. In this country, we overthrew a king George in order that we would have no king rule over us ó whoa, sounds very anti-Samuel chapter 8, where the Israelites begged to have a king rule over them. The cry of the people in our text, "***Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our***

Father David," code for "Soon we will have earthly triumph over those who wish to rule over us." Not the kind of thing we free Americans look forward too. The founding fathers were very careful to make sure we were not overthrowing one oppressor for another.

However, this is the reason Jesus came. Even though the Jews were constantly waiting for the overthrow of their oppressive Roman rule, and in a more troubling way, wished to rule over others in the way they were treated sort of as payback, (they wanted all those who were oppressing them to finally be under their feet so they could exact revenge on their foes and really give them a taste of their own medicine,) Jesus would have none of this. He comes to set the captives free, He comes to release the oppressed, but He also comes in peace, to take away the war-horses and chariots, to break the battle bow, and turn swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks. He comes to bring peace to the nations, and to offer righteousness and salvation to all who would receive it. This is something that the Jewish people (and dare I say all people today?) have no concept of understanding. And can you blame them? After being so shamefully treated by their enemies for so long, Pharaoh, Philistines, Babylonians, Edomites, Moabites, the Persians, and the Romans, they were looking for some payback from their Messiah - As we all do. We all would rather have our bullies get beat up themselves to know how bad they make people feel. We call it fair, we call it payback, we call it just deserts, but really, is that just not our sinful selves trying to feel more superior to another? Our sinful selves all want ironic punishments to be met out, so that we can declare, "Justice is served". We react with despondency when things do not work out as we feel they should. Look at just the response of the people who gather in front of the courthouses when decisions are made that they do not like. They hang their legislators in effigy and shout out nasty comments and generally make a scene of themselves ó every decision of president Trump comes to mind. Is this how we as Christians are to respond when things do not go as we would like? We, who are supposed to have peace, salvation, and forgiveness in our hearts? You do not have to like it, but you can pray about it.

This is why I ask us to look at this triumphant entry today as the Beginning of the End. It is the beginning of Jesus coming to end sin and oppression by the devil ó the *real* oppressor to each and every one of us ó and it is the end of our sinful responses to things that just do not go the way we want them too. Every person in our text today that is shouting out "Hosannas," are going to be crying out "Crucify," in a matter of days, because they will see Jesus as not overthrowing the Romans, as not overthrowing the rules and regulations of the Sanhedrin, as not doing this or that or taking power over His own foes beating Him. They will do this because they have not learned the reason for this season - forgiveness.

Jesus knows why He is here, and He comes, riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He shows us why He comes ó not to establish earthly rule as we see it but to establish Heavenly rule in our days, for we need this most of all. We need Jesus to go into Jerusalem and win the victory of the cross through His shedding of body and blood and establish real peace between us and the Father. Our sins, our oppressions, our selfishness, our desires that do not coincide with our Triune God's, are all dealt with at the cross. Jesus does this willingly, with great care and concern for you. He goes to save you from yourself. Yes, Jesus enters Jerusalem as the humiliated servant for your sins but will emerge by week's end as the promised Conquering Hero, that saves you from sin, death, hell, Satan, and the worldly pleasures that will drive you from your Savior, if that were possible. Truly you are seeing the beginning of the end of your oppressor, Satan, for the cross of Christ will be the victory over him for you and all who trust in Christ as the Savior.

Yes, we celebrate, and well we should, but not as those who celebrate without understanding. We understand Jesus' entry for us and for our salvation. It is not a parade that will identify the next earthly king to rule the world, but an entry that will establish where peace ó true peace ó is found. The faithful know this, and rejoice that Jesus still offers Himself at every Supper, that we may be restored again to our place next to the Heavenly Father as His children;

still offers His salvation in every baptism that we may have new life in His name; still offers Himself at every gathering of those who offer unfeigned thanks in His Name for all He does.

We praise His Holy Entry into Jerusalem every Sunday as we sing our proud hosannas again, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabbaoth; Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory." We praise His triumphant entry into our hearts at every proper baptism, and we praise His Holy Name in all that we do. It is my prayer that more people may come to worship our God aright, as you live your faith in His Name. In His most Holy Name. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS. AMEN+

Offering / Prayers

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment