

## ***“The King’s Rule”***

The Season of Advent focuses on the “coming” of the Messiah, the Christ – for that is what Advent means. And on this First Sunday in Advent, the focus is specifically upon His coming into Jerusalem – so that He might go to Calvary, and His cross.

In listening to this account of His Triumphal Entrance into Jerusalem – some might question why He does what He does. For instance, why does He send two of His disciples to get a donkey for Him to ride? Jesus is not very far from Jerusalem, about two miles. He could have easily walked that distance Himself (as He did many times). And practically speaking, it would have saved Him time.

Think about it – His disciples have to walk the two miles into Jerusalem, get the donkey and walk two miles back to Bethphage and Bethany, and then Jesus has to ride the donkey the two miles back into Jerusalem.

Is it because Jesus is too tired to make the journey? No. The simple answer is that all of this is in fulfillment of the Scriptures.

It’s reminiscent of King David setting his son Solomon on his mule to show that he was the rightful successor to his throne. And yet, when the Lord promises that one of David’s sons shall sit upon his throne and His reign shall be from everlasting to everlasting – it’s not Solomon of whom He speaks – but the Messiah who is to come.

And so we hear in Zechariah 9:9 – “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” – because Jesus is that Son of David. He is the Promised Messiah.

Matthew and Mark highlight Jesus as the Son of David in their Gospels – but St. Luke highlights Jesus as “king” – and more specifically – how Jesus rules as the Divine King here on earth.

Why does Jesus do what He does? Why is He so specific with His instructions? Because the Lord God rules in HIS way – not in the way of earthly kings – and certainly not in the ways of man (like you and me).

Did you notice how specific His directions are? His mandate is clear. “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here.”

As Jesus is known to do – He attaches His Words to visible elements – because this is the way He has chosen to work – because this is the way that God rules on earth. “If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ YOU SHALL SAY THIS: ‘The Lord has need of it.’ And the disciples found it “just as He had told them.”

The Lord Jesus Christ governs all things by His Word. He sets all things in their proper order. And He rules and reigns – using lowly, common, seemingly insignificant things – all so that He may bring His salvation and peace to those with ears to hear.

His disciples hear His mandate and do what He says. That’s what a disciple does – he follows the words of his Master. And did you notice how the crowds worshipped Jesus? They too are disciples, followers of Jesus (processing into Jerusalem with Him) – rejoicing and praising God for ruling over them – crying out with a loud voice, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Jesus is God on earth – ruling in HIS way – for our salvation. To rebel against the King is to endanger our lives and our salvation – as the parable that St. Luke records right before our text shows us. Jesus tells a parable about a nobleman who receives a kingdom – “but His citizens hated Him and sent a delegation after Him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’”

And how does that parable end? Jesus says – “But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.” Neither will it end well if we rebel against Jesus, and His reigning over us.

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard so-called Christians say something like – “I don’t need to come to church to be a Christian” – or, “I can worship God in my own way.” Oh really? The King says that we are not to neglect meeting together. He promises that where two or three are gathered in His name, there He is in the midst of them.

Who are we to tell Jesus how things are going to be – to say of His Words and instructions – “I don’t have need of it.” I tell you, it will not end well for those who rebel against the Lord and His Word.

Jesus takes plain water and tells us to make disciples by baptizing in His name – and some reject His way of working – saying His washing can’t do great things. He takes common bread and wine and tells us to eat and drink – and some refuse – denying the very means He has chosen to reign over our sin and give us life.

Jesus sends His ministers, promising – “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects Him who sent me.” (Lk 10:16) These are the ways that the Lord Jesus Christ has chosen to rule and reign in our midst – and to reject them is to reject Him – and that will not end well.

Dearly beloved, repent of taking the Kingdom of God into your own hands – crafting your own spirituality – and living as if you rule over your own life. This is why Jesus comes to you – to repent you – to turn you from the way that leads to eternal death – so that you might follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life.

Indeed, that’s what Jesus is doing here today. That’s why He comes to you in His Word and Sacraments today – to rule and reign over you. To wash you in His blood, for your salvation. To feed you with His crucified and risen Body and Blood – so that your sin may not rule your life – and death be your end.

Jesus Christ comes riding into your midst with HIS salvation – with YOUR salvation – but it is not yours to do with as you please. He works salvation His way, according to His will – but always for your benefit. That is why you can truly say with His disciples of old – “Blessed is the King, who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.”

Blessed are you who follow in His train – for the peace of heaven is yours, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.