

Palm Sunday, 2010

Grace, mercy and peace are yours because our Savior-King brought peace to us even when we were looking for it in all the wrong places.

36 As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. 37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: 38 "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Prayer: Lord Jesus, King of Peace, we thank you for your divine determination to march to the cross for us. Move us by your sacrificial love and extreme mercy to open our mouths and proclaim your praise everyday of our life. Shape and mold us into warriors for your kingdom bringing your peace to people who are looking for peace in all the wrong places. In your name we always pray. Amen.

Introduction: Have you ever just "followed the crowd"? It happens to me at large events. I don't know where the exits are so I just "go with the flow". I wonder how many people in the mass of people on that first Palm Sunday were just "going with the flow, following the crowd". Palm branches and cloaks paving the street. Palm branches and cloaks waving in the air. Large mobs of people shouting and chanting in joy and excitement back and forth, "He saves now! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the Son of David. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" What's going on? Who are you talking about? What peace? Who is the King that comes in the name of the Lord? Why all the smiling faces and joy and singing?

Theme and parts: **Joyfully Sing Praises to our King of Peace!**

- 1) He comes with divine authority
- 2) He comes with prophetic humility
- 3) He comes to bring peace

Part 1 He comes with divine authority

At the beginning of the last week of Jesus life, he spent the night in Bethany, the hometown of Martha, Mary and Lazarus whom he raised from the dead. How the Savior's mind must have been filled with the thoughts of his passion, his suffering, his death in just a few short days. His thoughts were quite different from the crowds that were following him now – since he raised Lazarus from the dead. People were coming from Jerusalem to see this Jesus of Nazareth who called a dead man back from the grave. Combine that with the crowds already with him in Bethany and you have a small riot around Jesus that day.

Jesus had shown in the past that he was no ordinary man. He had conducted miracles that point to only one conclusion. He had divine authority. On that Palm Sunday, Jesus showed his disciples that he was the one calling the shots again. Peter and John were to go ahead into the next town and find a colt tied there. It would be a colt that no one had ever ridden. When they found it Jesus told them to tell the owner, "The Lord needs of it." Jesus knew the future. Jesus knew the owner. Jesus knew the colt. How do untrained animals act around strangers? How would you expect an unbroken colt to react in a mob of people shouting and chanting? Yet we are told Jesus rode that colt into Jerusalem from Bethany.

The people of Jerusalem, the disciples and the people of Bethany all identified and recognized that Jesus was coming with divine authority. He had shown in the past his power over nature, wind and waves, over disease and sickness and even death. So the crowds sang appropriately, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord."

We too remember that our King and Savior is the Lord Almighty, who has all power and authority of God. He knows the wild animals and wind and waves and every whisper that is uttered on this earth.

2) He comes with prophetic humility

The people not only recognized that Jesus was coming with divine authority but they also recognized he was coming with a fulfillment of God's promise in the O.T. They sang from the psalms, not entire Psalms, mind you but broken bits and pieces that talk about the Messiah coming to save God's people. They sang from Psalm 118. Hosanna, which means, he saves now. They sang blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna to the Son of David." They correctly were connecting Jesus to the promises God had given long ago of the savior who would come and save his people. They remembered the promise given that the long awaited Savior would be a descendant of David's line and rule on David's throne forever. They remembered the promises that God

made of the Savior bringing peace to his people and restoring the fortune of Israel. defeating their enemies and bringing justice to the land.

But none of the gospel accounts of that Palm Sunday do we find people singing about these prophecies of humility of the coming Messiah:

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, **gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**

Isaiah 42:2 He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. 3 A **bruised reed** he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

I wonder if the people simply forgot these promises or if they simply didn't care about those promises because it didn't give them what they wanted – glory on earth. Jesus rode that donkey into Jerusalem as a sign – a sign that was built to point the way to salvation for God's people. They were to see these miracles and know that Jesus of Nazareth was and is still today the Savior from sin. They were to see that donkey and know that God was keeping his promise and coming on that day to save his people. But the people couldn't get past the signs – the miraculous powers – the earthly glory of divine authority. They were looking in all the wrong places for a Savior. They weren't connecting the dots of salvation.

I wonder then how are we doing as a group of Christians? Why are we here singing praise to Jesus? Are we here praising him for all the earthly blessings we receive, and could care less about his humiliation from being born a baby to being whipped mocked and spit upon by soldiers and ultimately being buried in the dirt? If the Lord would take away all these earthly blessings would we still sing his praises as our Savior from sin? That was the devil's question about Job. Look again at your King and recognize him from God's Word – he is the perfect King for us because he was equipped with humility to defeat the devil, sin and even the grave.

Part 3) He comes to bring peace.

How many times have I studied the account of Palm Sunday now? 20 years? And I gained a deeper understanding about this day in our Savior's life. Did you know that as Jesus entered Jerusalem surrounded by these mobs of people shouting his praises and chanting back and forth, "Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven." That his face was stained with tears and maybe just maybe he was weeping even then.

Jesus was weeping for these people because they didn't recognize him as God coming to save them from their sins. Oh they recognized him as bringing peace, but not the true lasting peace, eternal peace that Jesus; our Savior would die to win for them. They were looking for peace in all the wrong places. They didn't believe a humble suffering servant of God would bring them peace.

Searching for peace, joy and satisfaction in life is a full time job. I like to hunt. No, not sitting in a tree stand and waiting for something to happen by. I mean actively pursuing and chasing down the trophy. But I can tell you this that hunting might be exciting for a time but it is very taxing on your body. Stalking a huge elk or silently approaching an Alaskan brown bear takes all your energy. You can't do that for long. Life is a constant hunt for peace. When you start out as a child your parents and sibling teach you how to hunt for peace, joy and satisfaction. As you age, the hunt for peace takes on the form of dating for a spouse and companion, then a job, financial security, recognition from your peers and loved ones, health, comfortable retirement. Whatever stage of life you find yourself there is a hunt, a hunt that is tiring and non-stop. And it always seems to elude your grasp no matter how close you get to your goals – peace and joy and satisfaction slip through your fingers like sand. As you think you have found it, or captured it, the next morning it starts all over again. Thanks be to God for hunting down peace for us as our Champion King. He has captured eternal life and peace with God and has given it to us as a gift. The hunt is over. We are at peace with God by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Going along with the flow can turn out good sometimes. IT may ever get you to your destination. Take a close look at your Savior-King promised to us so long ago. See the real reason why we sing his praises! He comes with divine authority over even the very laws of nature. He comes with prophetic humility just as God had promised and established the peace of the forgiveness of sins by living obediently and dying innocently according to God's plan, humbling himself under God's law and lowering himself even to death on a cross. He comes to bring you peace. We sing his praises because the hunt for peace is over. WE can breathe easy and rest from earning God's favor and escaping God's judgment. Our Savior King has already fought that battle and won eternal peace for us all. Joyfully sing praises to our King of Peace!