

Sermon followed by Service

March 24, 2024 - Palm Sunday

John 12:12-19

Prince Charming meets and marries Cinderella; they imagine and expect: “and they all lived happily ever after;” but then expectations meet reality. You plan a Spring Break getaway somewhere down south; you expect warm weather and sunny skies, but then expectations meet reality. Your friend talks up the best ramen ever. You imagine and expect a best meal ever, but then expectations meet reality - “it’s a bowl of soup.” When expectations meet reality, expectations can take a real beating.

Palm Sunday is a lesson in expectations versus reality. Christ’s Palm Sunday parade wasn’t the only parade Jerusalem had ever seen. Roman historians tells us that Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judea, regularly held military parades - parades of Roman cavalry and soldiers who marched into Jerusalem - parades that fed Pilate’s pride, parades that kept the people put in their place.

Parades that looked so powerful. From the western side of the city, the opposite side from which Jesus would enter, Pilate would lead Roman soldiers on horseback and on foot. Each soldier clad in leather armor polished to a high gloss. On each soldier’s head, hammered helmets would gleam in the bright sun. At their sides, swords crafted from the hardest steel were sheathed in their scabbards; in their hands, each soldier would carry a spear. Or if he were an archer, a bow with a sling of arrows across his back. The entire parade route, drummers would

beat out the cadence of the march. The message was clear. Peace came through Roman might and power. Historians call it the “Pax Romana” - the Roman Peace.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus led a crowd of his followers into Jerusalem from the east side of the city. They expected Jesus would somehow meet and defeat the Roman legions and bring Jewish peace instead of Roman peace. They shouted: **“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord - the King of Israel!”** That word Hosanna means “Save us now!” Hosanna was the cry for King Jesus to replace Pax Romana, Roman peace, with their version of Jewish peace. And they were sure Jesus would do it. They were waving palm branches - the ancient sign for victory.

Jewish peace through King Jesus! That’s what the people expected - now consider the reality. **“And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written: “Fear not, daughter of Zion; your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt.”** In the ancient world, horses and chariots, not donkeys, brought victory on the battlefield. Horses and chariots were the show of ultimate power and glory. But Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. Not a warhorse, not a stallion, but a donkey. He has no chariots, no army, no sword, no helmet, no spear. What was Jesus thinking? How???

No wonder John writes: **“His disciples did not understand these things.”** The disciples didn’t get what God had promised. The disciples didn’t get what Jesus was doing. The disciples didn’t get what Jesus is really about.

Sometimes we might wonder: “How could they not have gotten it?” More times, it could be said of us: “How could we not get it?” There are so many times we don’t get it, aren’t there? Times we are spiritually blind to who Jesus is and what Jesus is about, why? Because so often we want a different kind of savior. A savior who instantly rights our wrongs, heals our hurts, miraculously delivers us from disease and all sorts of doom and gloom. A savior who gives only sweetness and light, happiness and heaven.

Then expectations come up against reality. Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Peter denied and denied and denied ever knowing Jesus. All the disciples abandon Jesus. Finally, on Friday, a crowd of people Jesus came to save are rejecting Jesus, calling for his crucifixion: “Crucify! Crucify!”?

And soon Jesus is nailed to a cross, hanging under a sign that reads: “**Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.**” Expectations meet reality and expectations take a beating. Expectations meet reality and we can be so slow to appreciate the reality of Jesus. Looking for a king who had pomp and power, people missed seeing that God does things differently. He offers peace - lasting, enduring peace - not through worldly power, but through the King riding on a donkey.

Seeing the reality of the cross, what happened to the disciples’ expectations? They had to hide themselves in fear. Seeing the reality of our crosses, what happens to our expectations? Oh, there are times we want to run and hide, aren’t

there? But we don't have to run or hide, lie or deny; we don't have to sell ourselves out and join the world around us.

God turned the darkness of Good Friday into the light of Easter. Jesus, mocked and shown off as a loser on Friday, turned into Jesus marching through hell, showing off his victory on Sunday. Jesus, bleeding and dying, dead on Friday, turned into Jesus walking and talking, alive on Sunday. Jesus under God's curse, Jesus gasping on Friday, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**" turned into Jesus raised by God, greeting his friends and disciples on Sunday - "**Peace.**" God turned the darkness of Good Friday into the light of Easter ... and not just for Jesus. God gives us the peace and victory of Jesus - peace with him, and victory over the darkness in us and around us.

Listen to what Jesus says this week about expectations and reality and peace. The night before Jesus is arrested, the night before Jesus is crucified, Jesus says: "**I have said these things to you, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world!**" And then what happens? That night, he's arrested; the next day, killed. But then after the darkness of Good Friday, after the disciples ran from Jesus and hid to save themselves, listen to what Jesus says on Easter Sunday: "**Peace be with you.**"

Whatever we might expect, Jesus has the reality, the peace we need! We don't always see it or feel it, do we? Why not? So often we look for that peace in here (our heart) or in here (our mind) or out there in the world. Look where God gives us peace - in his Word, his Gospel; in baptism; in the Lord's Supper. And

there we find blood, not blood that stains, but blood that washes away our sin and guilt. There we find promise, not promise that begins with an “if” (if you do what I want), but a promise that begins and ends with God loving and forgiving in Jesus. There we find peace, maybe not a peace filled with the expectations of this world, but a peace filled with the reality of heaven.

That’s not always easy to accept, is it? A pastor told this story about accepting reality. He takes two of his children to buy a new bicycle for his 5-year-old daughter. She picks out a shiny, blue bike with a banana seat and training wheels. Her three-year-old brother declares that it’s time for him to have a new bike too. Dad explains that he wasn’t ready; he still had trouble riding his tricycle; he wasn’t big enough for a big-kid bike; trying to ride a big-kid bike wouldn’t work; it just would get him hurt. But some day he would get a new bike. The three year old looks up at his dad: “Then I don’t get a new bike?” “Not today.” So the three year old mouths off at the top of his lungs: “Then I want a new daddy!” We don’t always like reality, do we?

The reality is that Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. The reality is that he suffers, bleeds, and dies. The reality is that we are called to follow him, to take up our crosses. The reality is that sometimes we don’t see our prayers answered, that sometimes our hopes are dashed, and deliverance from debt or depression or pain or heartbreak don’t come when and the way we want. The reality is that we don’t always understand the reality that Jesus is working for us.

But Jesus' disciples didn't stay in the dark about Palm Sunday forever. John tells us: “[Jesus'] **disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered ...**” Then they understood. And some day, we will too. Amen.

March 23 & 24, 2024

THE SERVICE

Pre-Service Music

Palm Sunday Selections - Valerie Floeter
Prepare the Royal Highway – Mark Schultz
All Glory Laud and Honor - James Engel
Winchester New - Jim Vyhanek
Hosanna, Loud Hosanna - John Carter

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we often have great expectations, until reality leaves us jaded and disappointed.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see Jesus lead a crowd of his followers into Jerusalem with great expectations. Then reality hit, and after disappointment, we have even better than we could ever imagine!

OPENING HYMN

“All Glory, Laud, and Honor”
Hymn 412

Refrain

All glory, laud, and honor to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.

You are the King of Israel and David’s royal Son,
now in the Lord’s name coming, our King and Blessèd One. *Refrain*

The company of angels is praising you on high,
and we with all creation in chorus make reply. *Refrain*

The people of the Hebrews with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems before you we present. *Refrain*

To you before your passion they sang their hymns of praise;
to you, now high exalted, our melody we raise. *Refrain*

As you received their praises, accept the prayers we bring,
O Source of ev’ry blessing, our good and gracious King. *Refrain*

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

M: Dear friends in Christ, for five weeks of Lent we have been preparing for the celebration of our Lord's paschal mystery. Today we come together to begin the solemn celebration of Holy Week. Christ entered in triumph into his own city, to complete his work as our Messiah; to suffer, to die, and to rise again. Let us remember with devotion his entry that culminated at the empty tomb and follow him with lively faith. United with him by Baptism, we share in his resurrection and new life.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Almighty and merciful Father,

we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.

We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.

We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.

We have done those things that we should not have done,

and we have not done those things that we should have done.

Have mercy on us, Lord!

Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,

according to your promises in Christ Jesus.

Silence for meditation and reflection

God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever. **Amen.**

M: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: Hosanna in the highest!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God our Father, we remember how Jesus entered Jerusalem and was welcomed as a king by those who shouted “Hosanna” and spread their clothing and palm branches in his path. Accept our praise and listen to our prayers as we rejoice in our triumphant King, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Zechariah 9:9–12

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
and the warhorses from Jerusalem,
and the battle bow will be broken.
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.
As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.
Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope;
even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

HYMN

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

Hymn 302

Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!
Let ev’ry hill and valley a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:

Refrain

Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God’s Word!

God's people, see him coming: your own eternal King!
Palm branches strew before him! Spread garments! Shout and sing!
God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you! *Refrain*

Then fling the gates wide open to greet your promised King!
Your King, yet ev'ry nation its tribute too should bring.
All lands, bow down before him! All nations, now adore him! *Refrain*

His is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding for kindness so abounding: *Refrain*

SECOND READING

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

M: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: **Hosanna in the highest!**

GOSPEL

Mark 11:1-10

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.' "

They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

"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 heaven!"

M: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: **Hosanna in the highest!**

EXPLANATION OF THE 2ND ARTICLE OF THE APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

Hymn 413

Hosanna, loud hosanna, the little children sang;
thro' pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang.
To Jesus, who had blessed them, close folded to his breast,
the children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed mid an exultant crowd,
the victor palm branch waving and chanting clear and loud.
The Lord of earth and heaven rode on in lowly state
nor scorned that little children should on his bidding wait.

"Hosanna in the highest!" that ancient song we sing,
for Christ is our Redeemer, the Lord of heav'n, our King.
Oh, may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice
and in his royal presence eternally rejoice.

SERMON

John 12:12-16

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Blessed is the king of Israel!"

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

"Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey's colt."

At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

HYMN

“No Tramp of Soldiers’ Marching Feet”

Hymn 414

No tramp of soldiers’ marching feet with banners and with drums,
no sound of music’s martial beat: “The King of glory comes!”
To greet what pomp of kingly pride no bells in triumph ring,
no city gates swing open wide: “Behold, behold your King!”

And yet he comes. The children cheer; with palms his path is strown.
With ev’ry step the cross draws near: the King of glory’s throne.
Astride a colt he passes by as loud hosannas ring,
or else the very stones would cry “Behold, behold your King!”

What fading flow’rs his road adorn; the palms, how soon laid down!
No bloom or leaf but only thorn the King of glory’s crown.
The soldiers mock, the rabble cries, the streets with tumult ring,
as Pilate to the mob replies, “Behold, behold your King!”

Now he who bore for mortals’ sake the cross and all its pains
and chose a servant’s form to take, the King of glory reigns.
Hosanna to the Savior’s name till heaven’s rafters ring,
and all the ransomed host proclaim “Behold, behold your King!”

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to liberate us
from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

C: **We confess that without your love we are lost.**

M: Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your
Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

C: **Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the
danger or the cost.**

M: Let us pray for those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face
ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom:

missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and their values as Christians.

C: By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.

M: Let us pray for those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, those victimized by war and injustice, and all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

C: Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.

M: Let us pray for those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

C: Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Ride On, Ride On in Majesty”

Hymn 411

Ride on, ride on in majesty! Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry.
O Savior meek, pursue your road,
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die.
O Christ, your triumphs now begin o’er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty! The angel armies of the sky
look down with sad and wond’ring eyes to see th’ approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty! Your last and fiercest strife is nigh.
The Father on his sapphire throne awaits his own anointed Son.
Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die.
Bow your meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O Christ, your pow’r and reign.

POSTLUDE

“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”

by Michael Burkhardt

“Winchester New”

by Craig Hirschmann

OFFERING

If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code with your mobile device.



Acknowledgments Used by permission: OneLicense no. 712373. Software distributed in partnership with Northwestern Publishing House. Created by Christian Worship: Service Builder © 2024 Concordia Publishing House. CCLI Copyright License 11194382, Size A and Streaming License CSPL059933, Size A **Setting Two** from **Christian Worship Unless** otherwise indicated, **Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version®**, NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. **No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet** Text: © 1984 Hope Publishing Co. **Prepare the Royal Highway** Text: © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

ENROLLMENT SEASON HAS BEGUN!

We are excited to open enrollment season at St. John Lutheran School for the 2024-2025 school year!

We would love to discuss partnering together with you in the Christian education of your child. St. John emphasizes creating intellectual curiosity in a safe environment through experienced, caring teachers who truly get to know your child. St. John has achieved exemplary WELSSA and NCPSA accreditation and our teaching proudly includes a Project Lead the Way (PLTW) transformative STEM curriculum. Our SEVP-certified international school program has extended our reach in teaching Jesus to students from across the world.

Do you know a family who you would love to see attend St. John? Recommendations and referrals from our families are our best source of meeting new families who value Christian education at St. John like we do. Please consider sharing the names and contact information of any friends and family with St. John, so that we may reach out to them.

For more information, please visit our website (stjohnslib.com/school), call our office at [847-362-4424](tel:847-362-4424), or email recruitment@stjohnslib.com. We are eager to discuss with you how we can partner with you in your child's education!

Palm Sunday Workship Project List - Recruit some help and take on a project - on your schedule or on ours! If you have questions, we have some contact names below, or ask Pastor.

Lunch

Lunch Coordinator - Plan for pizza lunch at noonish. Set-up for lunch.

Inside Cleaning

- Fellowship Hall - Clean Tables and Chairs (Magic Eraser?)
- Microwave / Freezer corner - kitchen supplies boxed up, empty cardboard boxes recycled

Inside Muscle

- Fellowship Hall - Tables and Chairs off floor (after cleaning)
- Dr Office - Move Stuff (Contact Pastor)

Inside Fix

- Light bulbs in Fellowship Hall
- Toilet seats - check and tighten as needed
- Classroom Window Number Decals
- Library / Conference Room - wiring / face plates in phone corner

Outside Easter Tomb - Contact Dan Freeck

- haul tomb pieces from gravel-lot garage
- spin cross poles from behind dumpsters to Tomb-Site
- assemble the tomb

Outside Yard Projects - Contact Todd Haefke

- Clean up flower beds for Easter
- Cut an edge along the north and south sides of the school so we can lay down gravel
- Lay down the gravel
- Rake up leaves
- Chip up brush and cut up bigger pieces for firewood
- If grass seed is not layed down, then finish it
- Police the southside easement
- Playgrounds - rake mulch to proper depth around playground equipment

The Joy of Mess Projects

- Clear School Roof drains
- Powerwash School Entry steps and Dr Office Overhang
- Clean Rain Gutters at Dr. Office (yellow ladder and tall ladder project)

Painting

- Paint (spray) pvc pipe - southeast corner of school

Inside Sit-Down Project

- Sort \$ records for retention/destruction - Contact Jim Thies



Holy Thursday	March 28	7:00 pm
Good Friday	March 29	7:00pm
Easter Service	March 31	9:00am
Easter Fellowship	March 31	10:00am
Easter Service	March 31	11:00am

(No worship service on Saturday, March 30)

Holy Thursday

Jesus, the Son of God himself, invites you to the Upper Room to show you “the full extent of his love.” Join him at his table as he gives you his body and blood, “given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of your sins.” Witness the Rite of the Stripping of the Altar and strengthen your resolve to never abandon the Lord. (Plan to leave the service quietly, reflecting on the love of our Lord.)

Good Friday

Alone in the dark, forsaken by God, Jesus pays for your sin and the sin of the world. Join us for a Good Friday Tenebrae Service, a service of shadows and darkness, reminding us of the darkness of our sin and guilt, the darkness of the world’s hate and anger against God, and, yes, the darkness of God’s curse on our sin, all charged against Jesus.

In a Tenebrae service, candles are extinguished and lights are dimmed to impress on us the utter darkness and loneliness, the horrible curse that Jesus faced on the cross. As you hear of Jesus’ burial and the service closes, expect to hear the *strepitus* and see a sign of hope. (Again, plan to leave the service quietly, reflecting on the love of our Lord.)

Easter Sunday

We can’t wait for the sun to come up! We have a living Jesus to meet! Join us for Easter service at 9, food and fellowship at 10, and Service at 11. You don’t have to be quiet leaving this service – rejoice and tell your world the best news of the year - Jesus lives!