

“You Preach and Let Me Be in Charge”

St Matthew 21:1-9

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SERMON 1955

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Our sermon text is from Matthew 21:2, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me.”

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All of the Old Testament has foretold the coming of Jesus, our Savior. The Prophet Jeremiah records the LORD’s promise saying,

“Behold the Days come, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

Having walked the earth for about 30 years, Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem was the beginning of Holy Week. In these last days of His life, He would complete His work of our salvation by suffering and dying to redeem all mankind from their sins. Our salvation is not a group project. Though it was our sins that earned the punishment of death and eternal damnation, He leaves not one thing left undone for us to do. It is His work and His alone, which has saved us.

Jesus is the righteous Branch, as Jeremiah said, which is raised up. Jesus is the Davidic King who comes in the name of the LORD. When Jesus has finished His work, there is for us who believe His judgment of not guilty. When He has finished His work, we have His perfect justice: That is, Jesus the Righteous One pays our penalty and we sinners walk away righteous. We now live in those days, in which Christ’s church is saved and living in safety.

The response of the multitude, who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem, teaches us how to respond to our Savior. First and foremost, we respond with faith, trusting in the Father’s promise that Jesus is “the LORD our righteousness.” The word, Hosanna, means “Lord, save us.” Once the Savior has been identified, our proper response is to trust in Jesus to save us.

Second, our response is to acknowledge and praise Him with our lives and lips. The people treat Jesus as their King who comes to save them. They declare Him to be the Victor by the palm branches which they waved. They give Him the red-carpet treatment by laying down their garments and branches for Him to ride over them. They praise Him with shouts and songs and prayers.

Romans 10 also connects the **faith of the heart** and the **words of the mouth** of those who are saved. Verses 8-9, “...’The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

The second thing which we need to learn is that **the actions of the disciples teach us about the work of today's pastors in preaching the gospel.** Matthew 21 tells us how Jesus sent two of His disciples to go into Jerusalem. Their job was to retrieve two donkeys so that Jesus might have a ride to take him into Jerusalem. The disciples do just exactly as Jesus directed them. And things happen just as Jesus had said. When asked, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?" they declare, "The Lord has need of them." The owner let them go.

There is **another account in Exodus** that is quite similar to today's Holy Gospel. The Lord God has determined to bring His people out of slavery in Egypt. He is going to redeem them and bring them to the Promised Land. **Moses is also told to go and speak to Pharaoh saying, "Let my people go."** Although at first Moses is reluctant, he eventually goes along with Aaron and they proclaim this message to Pharaoh. Furthermore, Pharaoh responds just as God had said that he would. The difference between these two accounts is that unlike the Palm Sunday account, Pharaoh said no to God. Moses told Pharaoh that the Lord has need of this, but Pharaoh refused.

In Exodus 3:19-20 God told Moses, "But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. ²⁰So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go." The two disciples, Moses and Aaron, are to go to Pharaoh with the full knowledge that Pharaoh will refuse their request.

From these two accounts, we learn that **God sends out His representatives to announce His message.** However, the results are not achieved by His disciples. For the one there is obedience to the message and the sending of two donkeys. For the other there is the refusal to heed the request of God. In neither instance is there any reliance upon the quality of the prophet's deliverance. Jesus doesn't say that if you give a good speech and convince them, then you will have success. The Lord already knows the results. The Lord simply desires that the message would be preached.

Luther says, "This is also said as consolation for preachers, that they should not be concerned about who believers or receives them. For it is decreed: "My Word that goes out from My mouth shall not return to Me empty" (Isa 55:11). Only go—that is, only preach. Do not be concerned about who they are who will hear. Let Me be concerned about that. The world will be against you; don't let that trouble you. Nevertheless, you will find those who will hear and follow you. You do not know them yet, but I already know them in advance. **You preach, and let Me be in charge.**" LW v.75, p.53).

Our Lord is in charge. We know that our God desires to save all men. His Son has secured the propitiation of the whole world. **The preacher is to be employed in order to proclaim this faith-creating message.** Yes, there will be those who will stubbornly refuse, but that is not the fault of the preacher. Yes, there will be those who will receive the message, but that does not go to the credit of the preacher, either. The message is to be proclaimed, and God gets all the credit when someone comes to trust in Jesus the Davidic King and righteous branch.

Zechariah said, "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'" (Matthew 21:5, ~Zech 9:9). In today's Holy Gospel, it says that "all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet {Zechariah}." The "all this" was the disciples getting a couple of donkeys and preaching the message. What resulted was a Palm Sunday parade into

Jerusalem, where the people believed and confessed Jesus, saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David.”

The preacher need not be concerned with the disposition of those who will hear. The preacher need not be concerned with the results or response of the hearer. The preacher simply needs to preach, “Behold, your King comes to you.” The preacher will be sent to a Pharaoh or two that will resist, and yet they cannot stop God’s kingdom from coming. The preacher will speak to a Saul or two that may have persecuted the church of God, but through the message he will be converted as if by a light from heaven. The preacher will speak to the daughter of Zion and they will come out to meet their Lord with a parade of palm branches and singing.

When Jesus is drawing near to Jerusalem, the Lord always sends out his disciples to preach the message, “Behold, your King is coming to you....” Where the pastors are preaching, Jesus is coming. The prophets, apostles, and now the pastors are to proclaim the good news of our King Jesus. This Son of David, this righteous branch has completely won the victory and now desires to save us through faith in His work for us.