

## **Our Humble King Enters Jerusalem: He Leaves Bearing Our Cross**

Luke 23:26-38, Palm Sunday

April 1, 2007

Beloved of the Lord....God seeks and desires our praise. He wants us to hear our voices break forth in song out of joy and thankfulness to Him. If we love Him, we will praise Him for His mercy which endures forever. Psalm 95 says, "O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." Psalm 98 says, "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise." People who sing are happy people. And there is no greater happiness in this world, than the happiness found in the knowledge that there is a better world to come, by the grace of Jesus Christ!

On Palm Sunday, when Christ our King triumphantly rode into the city of Jerusalem, the people were singing His praises. They were singing Hosannas to the Son of David, just like we did in our first hymn this morning. Hosanna means *Save Now*. Many of the people of Jerusalem, especially the children, knew that Jesus had come to save. They knew Christ to be the chosen Messiah, the Anointed of the Lord sent to redeem the human race. Even the little children were singing praises to Jesus as they laid down their palm branches before Him. For Jesus entered Jerusalem as a King. Yet Christ our King entered meek and lowly, riding upon a little donkey. As our humble King entered Jerusalem, parents and children alike were singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." Just think how happy and pleased Jesus was to hear the voices of these little children singing His praises! Is there ever a sweeter melody than the voice of a child in song? God in heaven above rejoices when He hears little children singing praises to Jesus!

Not only children, but adults should sing His praises too! For He is the humble King of parents and children alike. He rode on in majesty to the victory of the cross. When we come to church every Sunday we should sing to Him with our whole heart and mind. Our own soul should be filled with the faith and knowledge that Christ our glorious King came down from heaven, to live and to die and to rise again! And when we sing His praises, we should not be discouraged if we do not sing as nicely as our choir, nor should we be discouraged if we sing off key, or if there is only a few of us. God only desires that we sing with believing hearts, as little children. You know when little children sing, they are not much concerned about notes or timing. They do not know the meaning of crescendo, or [double] forte, or pianissimo.....yet that doesn't stop them. They sing joyfully from the heart simply because they love Jesus. And that is exactly what

the little children did on that first Palm Sunday. They sang joyfully from the heart to their Lord. So let us remember each Sunday, and even every day, that God desires to hear our praises. We are to have the faith and voice of little children in song. "O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."

### I. The daughters of Jerusalem did not receive their King.

After Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, it was not long before things changed. Judas betrayed by Him. His disciples abandoned Him. Though innocent, Jesus was tried and condemned before Pontius Pilate. Soon the whole city of Jerusalem cried out "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" This is because many of the people who first sang His praises as He entered into Jerusalem, did not believe. They sang His praises because they loved His miracles. They thought He might be an earthly king to lead a rebellion against the Roman Empire. Most of the people of Jerusalem did not love Christ by faith. So Jesus is condemned to death and forced to carry His own cross to Calvary. But He is so weary, beaten, and physically exhausted that He cannot carry that heavy cross. The Roman soldiers force an African man named Simon to carry the cross. As the funeral procession winds through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, women weep and wail at the dreadful sight. Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." But why would Jesus say this?

First, Jesus calls them daughters of Jerusalem because they are not daughters of the Lord. They are not disciples or followers of Christ. They have no faith. Their tears are not repentant tears. They do not feel bad about their sin. Their outward grief and emotion did not stem from broken hearts which feel the shame and guilt of sin. These women were not grieving over their sin. Though they showed grief on the outside at seeing the suffering Christ, spiritually speaking their hearts were still hard as a rock. They loved to sin and they couldn't get enough of it. So Jesus said to them, don't pity Me, but pity yourselves and your children.

They were to pity themselves and their children because God would soon punish them for their refusal to repent. Jerusalem as a whole was especially punished by God because they crucified the Lord of Glory. Years later, after Jesus said these words, Roman soldiers surrounded and laid siege to Jerusalem. Because no food was allowed to get in, many starved to death. Mothers saw their own children die from starvation or disease. The childless and barren women were better off than those mothers who had to see their own children die. It was horrible. Many people saw death as a better alternative than life. Yet they deserved these punishments

from God. Jerusalem was an unclean vessel which rejected God's own Son.

If in our hearts we think that somehow we are better than the people of Jerusalem, we are terribly wrong. There is not one sin that the people of Jerusalem committed that we haven't. In the Bible God teaches us that nothing but punishment awaits us if we refuse to repent of our sins. In Jeremiah 18:11 God Himself says, "Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good." Truly God brings evil upon those people whose hearts are hardened against God when they refuse to repent. If we love sin more than we love God, nothing but punishment awaits us, especially after death. Yet if we repent of our sins, if we are truly sorrow for all of our crimes like the penitent thief on the cross, God will readily forgive us. Yet He doesn't forgive us because we repent, nor does He forgive us if we outwardly try to change our lives, He forgives us only for the merits of His own Son, Jesus Christ, who came to save all men. If we are to repent of our sins, we are also to believe in Jesus.

But the daughters of Jerusalem didn't believe in Jesus. Jesus said, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" What does this mean? The green tree is Jesus Himself.... or better yet His time spent on earth as the Prince of Life, the Prince of Peace. Jesus was the living and breathing Gospel which no man should've been able to deny. His visible time on earth was the green tree. Yet even at such a glorious time as this, how did men treat our Lord? Disciples left Jesus by the droves. He really had few followers, especially at the time of His death. The world especially hated Christ. They put Him to death, crucified Him between two thieves. Often in our world today we get discouraged when we see so few people following the truth. Usually people join the larger and more popular churches rather than care for whether or not the true Word of God is being taught. But we shouldn't be discouraged. We should expect such things for we are in the time of the dry tree. Though we all desire great numbers to repent and be converted to the Lord, though we desire heaven to be filled, if it didn't happen in Jesus' day, should we expect it to happen now? God's Church, the Invisible Church has always been meek and lowly, a wallflower. Christ did not enter Jerusalem on a beautiful steed, our humble King entered Jerusalem on a lowly donkey. God's visible church on earth is the lowly donkey that carries Christ around wherever we go. Yet the people of this earth, the daughters of Jerusalem, are not looking for a lowly donkey. They are looking for a beautifully sculpted horse, a racing champion, worthy of the Kentucky derby!

II. Our crucified King bears our sins upon the cross.  
Dear believer, which is more important to you? Though

you be but a lowly donkey, do you find honor in carrying Christ before the world? Must the church you belong to be that beautiful racing steed which prefers beauty over truth, or do you prefer truth over beauty? Our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was not ashamed to ride a little and lowly donkey into Jerusalem. Nor was the King of all Creation ashamed to receive the praises of little children! Indeed He preferred their voices of faith rather than the hypocritical praise of Jerusalem's rulers. He is pleased with our praises as well this day, if only we praise Him by faith. And what is this faith that we carry in our hearts? It is the faith of Jesus Christ, that He is our Savior our Redeemer from all sin! Though crucified between two thieves, He was and is and ever shall be True God, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost! Though He was King of the Jews, and King of all kings, He was born to lowly parents, in a lowly stable, being placed in a lowly manger. He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." Phil 2

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Though the world thought they were doing themselves a favor, they were unknowingly doing God's will. In ignorance they pierced His hands and His feet. They put a crown of thorns upon His head. They parted His garments and gambled away His coat for money. The rulers of Jerusalem which should have greeted Him in song like the little children, instead "derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.....the soldiers also mocked him..... saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself." While He suffered and died on the cross, the world mocked Him. We mocked Him! Yet on the cross Jesus pleads with His heavenly Father saying, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do!"

Dear brethren....Christ died for all, and so Christ died for you. And the Father for the sake of the Son, has reconciled the whole world unto Himself! Christ died for those who nailed His hands and feet to the cross. Christ died for those who mocked and ridiculed Him! Christ died for you and so you are indeed forgiven! God desires and earnestly invites all of us to faith, for "there is joy in the presence of the angels, over one sinner that repenteth!" Let us therefore repent of our sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who entered Jerusalem meek and lowly, bearing our cross, our sins upon Himself. He was not ashamed to enter into Jerusalem upon a lowly donkey. To this day He rejoices in His lowly Church. He especially is happy to hear the praises of His little children. You too are a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. May we ever and always sing His praises as little children so joyfully do. Amen.