

Palm Sunday
March 29, 2015
Psalm 24
Jesus, the King of Glory
Rev. George Ferch

Dear Friends in Christ,

Quite a different start to our service! Children, parents and we entered worship with palm branches and song, "Hosanna, loud hosanna." Lord, save us. You are our victorious King who comes in the name of the Lord.

We have created a living tableau of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem the Sunday before he suffered and died on the cross in full payment for all our sin. St. Mark's gospel is the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy. We rejoice greatly.

The Psalm for Palm Sunday in all lectionaries, the appointed lessons for each Sunday, is Psalm 24. It also is the psalm for either the first or the second Sunday in Advent. Jesus comes into the world as a baby to live our lives. Jesus enters Jerusalem, the Son of Man, to die our deaths.

In both instances, there is more to Jesus than meets the eye. Jesus is more than that lowly and humble servant. **Jesus is the King of Glory.** King David outlines this. He owns the entire world. He is served by a holy people. He comes in glory.

Jesus is the King of Glory in every sense. A king rules. Jesus rules the hearts of sinners through the gospel. He rules the universe as the exalted Savior. His human nature now shares in that glorious rule he always possessed as the Creator of the universe. Jesus' glory lies in his holy essence, in his holy rule, and in the glory he gives his people through forgiveness.

Jesus is God who owns the entire world. He shared in its creation with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. His lowly appearance on Palm Sunday does not give that away. Yet he did know where the disciples would find a beast of burden. He did have the right to take it and use it because he created it.

David is more specific, "The earth is the LORD's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters." Believers and unbelievers, forests and animals, seas and mountains, and the passing of days and nights all are under Jesus' rule as the King of glory.

David asks the question. "Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?" God dwelt on Mt. Sinai and gave Moses the Ten Commandments and other laws. Any person or animal that touched the mountain died. The Israelites trembled before the LORD and asked Moses to stop God from speaking. They also knew they could not enter the most holy place in the tabernacle and later the temple because of their sins. Their hands stained by sin and their hearts filled with evil thoughts and desires, their covetousness and idolatry kept them separated from God.

Our hands are dirty with our transgressions of the commandments. We cannot wash our hands of sin any more than Pilate could wash his hands of Jesus' blood before he turned Jesus over to be crucified. Our hearts spew forth lust and false witness and anger and selfishness and prejudice and injustice. We hear God command, "Be holy for I the LORD your God am holy," and we tremble and cower in fear.

Jesus, the King of glory is served by a holy people. How can we come into the kingdom of God? God has declared us holy by Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Jesus' new life declares us clean. The Holy Spirit endows that holiness to us in his call, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." The blood Jesus shed on the cross washes us and we are whiter than snow. His blood covers our shame and guilt. St. John wrote in his first epistle, "The blood of Jesus his Son, purifies us from all sin."

David describes God's holy people. "The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god." God's people are holy not in ourselves but in Christ. His righteousness is ours. We saw that miracle a few minutes ago. Rosa came to Holy Baptism in the darkness of sin and unbelief. The Holy Spirit in the Word lifted the gates of her heart and she came away from the font in the light of forgiveness and faith. Now she is one of God's holy people who serves Jesus the King of glory with clean hands and a pure heart

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the people gave him a royal welcome as the King of glory. He had come to defeat all the enemies of God's people. His welcome was short lived. However, we do not want to conclude that everyone who worshiped Jesus then was yelling for his death later.

Psalm 24 calls us to lift the gates of our hearts and welcome Jesus as the King of glory who rules our hearts and minds through his gracious love. He is "strong and mighty in battle" and has defeated sin, death and hell. We welcome Jesus and his victory when we receive the good news of his redemption in faith.

As King David wrote his song about the King of glory coming in, he certainly had in mind when the Savior returns at the end of the world. The angels will gather believers so we can welcome him back. Like the believers in the crowd who laid palm branches in Jesus' path. We will gather and sing our hosannas to Jesus on that great day.

Advent and Psalm Sunday go together like our hands in applause to offer our cries, "O Lord, save us." We welcome "he who comes in the name of the Lord...the LORD almighty-he is the King of glory." Amen. <SDG>