

The Humble King

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Humility; Service; Kingdom of God; Palm Sunday / Philippians 2:5–11; John 12:12–19

- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Palm Sunday King.

Oh, the crowds! They were packed, lining the streets. Something we can only dream of right now. They were in town for the feast of the Passover that was to occur later that week. They all heard that a king was coming into town. They took Palm Branches, they shouted, Hosanna! This King...is King Jesus. And He rode into town on the back of a donkey. This King riding into town is a humble king.

Today, Palm Sunday is the start of Holy Week. It's going to feel odd at times. It already does for me. We are all used to having Palm Branches in our hands - singing *All Glory, Laud, and Honor* to the King. There's no Palm Branches, there is the singing, but we do that separately. It seems so strange, but here we are. We are now the third Sunday into this with who knows how many more until we gather again.

Today, yes, today, is a day of great comfort, we begin this week in the Lord, we begin this week joining Jesus on His walk to Jerusalem and his journey to Calvary's Holy Mountain. Our hymns focus on this Humble King riding into Jerusalem. That's where I want your focus to be at least for a few moments.

Get Jesus in you mind. He isn't coming as an earthly King that's going to destroy the ugly Roman enemy. He's coming humbly. This past week, you probably saw the USNS Comfort arrive in New York City to aid in the fight against Covid-19. I watched on my computer President Trump send off the ship, and then I watched it arrive in New York City. It's a ship that is supposed to bring comfort. It's a

magnificent ship with 1000 beds and fully staffed. It's supposed to bring comfort. I'm sure it does for the many that will be helped physically by the ship.

Yet, today, you and I are wondering what's next. Where do we go from here? Look to the texts. We know where to go to. We know that we go to Jesus for comfort. We know that we need to go this Humble King...not some might magnificent earthly king or even a grand ship.

He was born in the likeness of men, taking the form of a servant. As he was found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Jesus Christ rode that donkey into Jerusalem so that he could die.

Yes, the sights and sounds of the first Palm Sunday seemed like a victory parade of some sort. That wasn't it. The cries of Hosanna from the first Palm Sunday ring ever more so in our ears as we cry out those same words, "Hosanna" which means, Lord, save us now. That's what we need, that's what we desire. Christ humbly came...but how often do we live as servants? How often do we think of only ourselves and our well-being? I'm sure those answers are opposite. We are by our sinful nature selfish. We think of only ourselves. We aren't all that humble.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, where do you find yourselves not being humble? Do you still think that closing everything done for a rapidly spreading virus is government over-reach? Do you think about only yourself and your needs? Did you purchase 6 giant packs of toilet paper before the limits on the number you could buy went into effect? Are you actively looking for ways to humble yourself and look out for your neighbor, to serve your neighbor from a distance? Are you living in fear and anxiety? And if even try to live humbly on your own or even empty yourself, you will come up empty. There are many ways, many many ways that we are not living humble lives in when it feels like you and I are on house arrest.

That's where we are at. We are in uncharted waters, we are sailing through the unknown, but isn't each day an unknown. We don't know what tomorrow will bring. Only God does. And Jesus Christ in human flesh when He rode into Jerusalem knew what tomorrow was bringing. He knew what was going to

happen that week. He was going to completely empty himself for you. He became obedient to the point of death for you. He became obedient to the point of death on the cross.

That's why we gather in unique ways on this Palm Sunday. We gather to focus on Jesus on his humble self. When Jesus lived and walked on the earth he didn't always use his divine powers. He emptied himself and developed in the womb of his mother Mary like the rest of us did inside the wombs of our mothers. He put himself in our place...he took his place under the Law for us, for you. Ultimately it meant not using his divine power to take on the blows that sinful mankind was doing to him: the arrest, the mocking, the betrayals, the denials, the floggings, the scourging, and finally the crucifying. He died on the cross for you. That was his ultimate act of humiliation. He was buried in the grave. The thing is Christ Jesus, our victor, didn't stay empty. When he emptied everything of himself, he was filled back up. He was exalted for you.

He was exalted so that you would never taste the wrath of God. He was resurrected for you. And because Jesus Christ lives, every knee will eventually bow before him. He's got the greatest name. And at some point every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Your tongues are confessing him even now. Even as you worship together, but yet at a distance. Dear Friends in Christ, fellow believers, yes we may be separated, but you have a King and because he is humble, because He emptied himself, fills you up. You may feel empty. I know there are times that I have. There are times that I am struggling with these days. Yet, Christ Jesus fills you up. He fills me up through His Word of Comfort. Not a ship...but His Very Word.

His Word fills you up, we desire it even more so now. At least I do. Because Christ emptied Himself for you...your sins are forgiven. Your selfishness is forgiven. Your lack of humility is forgiven. Because we have a humble king that leads the charge into battle, we don't have to fear, because we don't have face sin's punishment. Christ already took that upon himself for us.

I had a friend that pointed something grand out to me this week as we were discussing Covid-19 and the effects that it has on us. He shared with me these

words and I want them to share them with you as Christ is seeking you to serve humbly.

Keep up the good fight, my friend. Death and the Dragon are defeated. Holy Week is about to invade us! The charge is lead by the Man on a donkey. Behold, the Servant of the Lord! He bears the burden of your diseases, short-comings, and sins. Look to the Man on the pole and be healed. "Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord"

Dear Friends, Holy Week is here! Yes, Death and Dragon are defeated...even now. The fight that we face is not a physical fight. It's spiritual and this spiritual war is led on Charge by the Man on a donkey. A humble King on a donkey.

Today, dear Church...as we go forward into this Holy Week, let us take the time that we have, to remember the Passion of our Lord. Take some time to read the Passion Narrative together as a family and really see what Christ is doing for you. Yes, even now He bears the burden of disease-even this blasted Covid-19. You hate it and so do I. He's bearing that burden for you. He even bears your short-comings and sins.

Dear Church, I have seen on Facebook many things over the last two weeks, but think about this one. The Church is not empty. The Church is deployed. Think of it in this. Think of this...you are worshipping together, but separately. You are also deployed to doing acts of humility...even if it is just staying home to help prevent the passing of this virus. The deployed Church is being lead by the humble King who rides into Jerusalem to face his death on the back of a borrowed donkey.

So yes, dear Church, look to the man, the humble king who rides on the donkey. Look to the man, the humble king who is nailed to the tree. Look to the man, the humble yet exalted king who is alive for you...and yes, "Tell of the Greatness of the Lord" to your friends and family at a distance!

In Jesus Name. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.