

Sermon: Palm Sunday

Text: Luke 19:28-48 (v.37)

Theme: The King shows what He had come for

Goal: Step by step, Jesus shows who He is and for what He had come.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: Usually we celebrate Palm Sunday focusing on the Triumphal Entrance itself without looking to some events that happened while Jesus was entering the city and without thinking about the meaning of these events. It's nice to celebrate with palm branches as we do and to welcome the King who comes in the name of the Lord. But at the same time the King brings a message with Him in His words and in His behaviour, a message not only for the people of His time, but for the people nowadays as well. We will see His humbleness, His position, His power, His sorrow and compassion, and His willingness to face death on our behalf. The King shows who He is and what he had come for.

A) Kings and armies used to enter the cities with great processions and splendour, especially when they were coming as victors after a war, bringing after them the prisoners and the loot they had caught. The king rode a big horse, banners were carried and the people shouted receiving their king. – Jesus had a Triumphal Entry in Jerusalem as a King as well, celebrating His coming victory over death, Satan and hell. He didn't have an army with Him and He was not riding a big horse, but a little donkey, according to the prophecy: “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.” (Zachariah 9:9). The apostle Paul

wrote in the Epistle for today: “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus... He humbled Himself...” (Philippians 2:5,8).

B) This had been the first time Jesus allowed this kind of public demonstration, and He Himself organized it. He wanted to show who He is and people reacted well. They recognized Him as **“the King who comes in the name of the Lord”**, accomplishing the prophecy of the Psalm 118:26, the psalm for today. Very soon He would be mocked by Pilate and the soldiers as “the King of the Jews” and this was the accusation written upon the cross. But we believe and trust that He is our King who comes in the name of the Lord and that we are citizens of His Kingdom by His grace.

C) He came in **peace** to establish peace between God and humankind, and peace among His followers. “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest” was sung by the crowd at His Triumphal Entrance and had been sung by the angels when He was born in Bethlehem. His Kingdom of Peace doesn't have borders, and His army doesn't use swords, they use the weapon of the Spirit, “which is the Word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

D) In spite of His humbleness, He came with **authority!** *First*, he rebuked the critics of the Pharisees, who didn't accept the praise of the people. His answer, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out”, is a severe warning about our silence if we don't witness that Jesus is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. God will choose others to cry out to the world that He is the King, the Saviour! *Second*, He showed His authority when he cleansed the temple. I am always amazed how He did this and why He was not put in prison because of what He did. The Pharisees were looking for an opportunity to catch Him and to hand Him over to Pilate. Why didn't they capture Him when He cleansed the temple from the bad

business that was done there? – It was not the right time for God. Jesus had to show His authority as the Son of God, because the temple was His Father’s house!

E) “As Jesus approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it.” Can you imagine a victorious king entering the city, and crying? Jesus showed all His sorrow and His **compassion** for His people and for the Holy City. The place that God had chosen to bear His name rejected the Son of the Father and was about to kill Him, as we heard in the Parable of the Tenants last week. – The Bible tells us that Jesus wept only twice: When He saw Mary and Martha weeping when Lazarus passed away; and when He was entering Jerusalem. His compassion came out in tears for His beloved people. He was now coming in peace; but God would come once as a strong judge over those who were rejecting His offering of peace.

F) Even rejected by the leaders of the church, Jesus used the last days He had on earth to **teach** His people. “Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple” (Luke 21:37,38). Some of His most remarkable parables and teachings are from the Holy Week. He knew that some would believe in Him. People and even the disciples were confused about the opposition of the established church and Jesus. But they had to be nurtured with Jesus’ words. “After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken” (John 2:22). His teaching was not in vain, and we are beneficiaries of His teaching till now.

G) But above all details and reasons of Jesus Triumphant Entry in Jerusalem is the fact that He was going to accomplish His main task

why He came to earth: To be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. His **sacrifice** on the cross would happen this week, on Good Friday. He entered Jerusalem willingly and conscious that this would be His last journey in His earthly ministry. Paul Gerhard, a famous Lutheran poet, wrote the hymn *“A Lamb of God bears willingly”*. And he says in verse 2 and 3: *“Go down, my Son, the Father said,/ to free my children from their dread /of death and condemnation./ The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,/ but in Your death they all can share/ the joy of Your salvation!”/ And the Son answers: “Yes, Father, yes, most willingly/ I bear what You command me;/ My will conforms to Your decree,/ I risk what You have asked me./ – O wondrous love, what have You done?/ The Father offers up His Son;/ the Son, content, agreeing!/ O Love, how strong you are to save,/ to put God’s Son into His grave,/ all people thereby freeing!”*

Conclusion: We can rejoice and celebrate Palm Sunday because we know how the story ends: The sacrificed Lamb of God rose again from death on Easter Sunday! By faith we are sharing His victory, and we are part of the multitude that follows Jesus with palms of joy till we enter with Him in the glory, as John describes it in such a beautiful way in Revelation 7:9-12: “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

