

Sermon for March 24, 2013 – Palm Sunday

Luke 19:28-40

Theme: Praise The King who Comes in the Name of the LORD

- 1) *Praise him with unquestioning service.*
- 2) *Praise him with your earthly possessions.*
- 3) *Praise him by telling others about Him.*

²⁸ After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'" ³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ They replied, "The Lord needs it." ³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" ⁴⁰ "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

How do you send a soldier off to war, who is going to defend your freedom? You might want to serve him by carrying his bags, washing his car, and taking care of his house while He is away. You might want to spend some money and buy him dinner, send him care packages or give him something he would truly appreciate. If you truly loved him, expense and inconvenience mean nothing. If you are a relative, you certainly will be proud of him and tell others what he is doing for all of us.

Today we remember a soldier who went to war for us. Actually, we remember more than a soldier: we remember our King, our God, our Savior and our Brother. Jesus' entrance in Jerusalem was his parade before battle – his send-off by his disciples. In remembrance of what Jesus has done to save us it is only fitting that we also **Praise The King who Comes in the Name of the LORD.** 1) *Praise him with unquestioning service.* 2) *Praise him with your earthly possessions.* 3) *Praise him by telling others about Him.*

Part One: Praise him with unquestioning service.

Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem to battle for our salvation. So what did Jesus' friends do to send him off? On the night before arriving in Jerusalem, Martha, Mary and Lazarus held a dinner in Jesus' honor. This dinner was an expression of their gratitude to Jesus. Mary even went so far as to pour extremely expensive perfume on Jesus. This was meant to prepare him for his death. It was a testimony of her faith.

After a restful night, Jesus got up and started off for Jerusalem. *As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'"*

What a strange assignment: Go into a town and find a colt which no one has ridden. . . untie it without permission . . . and simply reply when asked: "the LORD needs it!"? It's an odd request, but do the disciples

question him? Do they ask “why”? No, they simply go and obey. Why? Because their dear Lord ask them to do this. They loved Jesus and trusted him – regardless of how strange His request sounded. Out of love, they unquestioningly obeyed him.

Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ They replied, "The Lord needs it."

Now imagine getting up tomorrow morning to the sound of your car starting. Imagine running out to your car and seeing “Chiefy” sitting in it - getting ready to back out of your drive way. When you ask him what he’s doing, he says: “Mayor Blaha needs it.” Now maybe you would be ok with that – knowing Greg for as long as you do - but I have to admit that I would probably still try to stop him to get a better explanation.

How could the owners of the donkey trust the disciples, and simply let their colt go? Because it was for the Lord. Their service of letting the colt go (after finding out it was for the LORD) shows that they had faith in Jesus. This faith and love in their Savior from sin demonstrated itself in unquestioning service.

Now let us step back from our sermon text. We noted the unquestioning, faith-motivated acts of service of Jesus’ disciples and followers. They loved him because they recognized who he was. Mary, even understood what He was about to do: die for her sins. We, too, claim to be disciples of Jesus. Jesus suffered and died for all our sins. We know and believe this. But do we thank Jesus for it? Do we praise God by unquestioningly doing what He asks? I have to be the first to admit that I don’t. Many times in my thoughts, and sometimes in my prayers, I ask: “Why Lord?” Wouldn’t it be better if I did this? Wouldn’t it be better if I did that?” Haven’t you done the same?

“Lord, forgive our questioning hearts!” And forgive us He does! Jesus was on a mission. He was marching towards Jerusalem to die for our sins. As we see his uncomplaining service for us, are our hearts not moved to serve him unquestioningly?

Part Two: Praise him with your earthly possessions.

³⁵ They brought [the colt] to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

Understand the honor they were giving Jesus: they were treating him as their king. Laying down Palm branches before Him was like rolling out the red carpet. Our text from Luke does not mention the Palm branches, but focuses on the greater honor the people gave him: they even laid their cloaks on the road before him.

As a child, I remember learning about chivalrous men who would lay their coat over a puddle so that a lady would not get her feet wet. It is one thing to do it for a lady. It’s another thing to do it for a donkey. You’ve seen parades with horses, right? They leave a mess on the road. So would the donkey and colt that Jesus rode.

Let’s take a little more time to think about this wonderful honor the people gave Jesus. Garments back in Jesus’ day were far more valuable than they are today. Everything was made by hand. Most people only possessed one or two outer garments. Imagine laying 1/3 of all your clothing in front of a donkey to trample over and do who knows what to. Why did the people do this?

Because their Savior was far more important to them than their clothing. They loved their Messiah and trusted that He would both save them and provide for their earthly needs. This is why they praised Jesus with their earthly possessions.

Oh, how attached we are to our money and goods! We love our TVs. We love our cell phones. We love our cars. We love our movies. Would we be willing to part with just one of those items in praise of our loving Savior? Would you be willing to give up your cable or satellite TV package and lay 100% of those savings at the feet of Jesus?

O how we wish we could say yes, but our greedy, sinful hearts scream no. It's sad, isn't it? It is far easier for us to spend more money on entertaining ourselves that it is to praise the LORD with it by supporting local charities, Christian education, missions and our own congregation.

And then there is another problem: Sometimes the church we support squanders money through wasteful spending. When we perceive this, we may start asking ourselves: "Why should I give more money to the church? They're just wasting my offerings through needless building projects and spending. Why should I enable them?" Then we hesitate to offer more of our earthly possessions out of fear that it will be wasted.

But did you catch the faith of the people laying their cloaks before Jesus? Humanly speaking, what a waste! Did they laid their cloaks down so a donkey could ruin them? No! They laid their cloaks – their wealth – before their Savior who was riding the donkey! They didn't care what happened to their offering. Even if their cloaks were ruined, they didn't consider their offering a waste. Why not? Because their cloaks were laid down in faith. They were laid down in honor of their Savior who was marching to the cross to give up his life for lost sinners – sinners who constantly squander and waste the gifts God gives them.

When I see the faith of the crowd that willingly praised God with their possessions, I hang my head in shame. Don't you also feel the same? But when I see the forgiving love of Jesus, I am motivated to love him back. The more I take to heart his determination to win my salvation, the more willing I am to freely lay down my cloak – my money and my possessions - in praise of him. Nothing we offer Him is ever wasted. Why not? Because even if "donkeys" make a mess of what I offer, it doesn't change the fact that it was offered to Christ – for His glory and His praise.

Part Three: Praise him by telling others about Him.

When [Jesus] came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Remember that Jesus was coming from Bethany. The people in that area knew full well how powerful Jesus was – having seen Jesus' miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead! They publicly praised Him as the king who comes in the name of the Lord. What does that mean? It means that He bears the name of the LORD. He is the Savior that God has promised. He is God's Son. He is God himself.

Yes, the promised Savior came to establish his eternal kingdom of peace between God and man. Sin would be paid for and we would be reconciled to God.

Not even the fear of the Pharisees or Romans could stop the crowd from telling others about Him. They wanted to praise God with words of salvation, with words that describe what Jesus would do for them.

And how about us? Do we praise God by telling others about Jesus, and what He has done? Or are we afraid of what our friends might think? Are we afraid that we might offend someone? Or have we, worse yet, forgotten what our salvation means? And so we pray:

“Lord, forgive us for the times we are scared, for the times our praise is half-hearted, for the times we forget the sacrifice you made for us. LORD we are sinful. How can you love us when we so often question you, are selfish towards you and even neglect to simply say thank you? LORD we are sorry for our sins. But you, dear Jesus, still love us. You went to Jerusalem to be sacrificed for our sins. Because of this, we stand forgiven. You are our King. O LORD, move our hearts to a proper response to your love that we may praise you with unquestioning service, generous giving and by telling others of the wonderful salvation you won for us. In your name we pray. Amen.”