

Palm Sunday
March 25, 2018

Mark 11:1-10
131-133-749*-130

*CW-S – “The Love of Christ, Who Died for Me”

Rejoice Greatly – Jesus Is the King We Need!

- I. He is our King who is always in control.
- II. He is our King ever faithful to His Word.
- III. He is our King who comes to save sinners.

Dear Christian friends,

“Rejoice greatly!” Zechariah wrote in his **OT prophecy** of Palm Sunday. So we see the **crowds doing** that first Palm Sunday. There was a lot of EXCITEMENT and JOY as Jesus rode that donkey into Jerusalem.

But how can we GET ALL EXCITED about this when we’ve seen this SO MANY TIMES before? **For example, your first trip** to a **water park** at the Dells – WOW! But after ten more trips it’s “OH, yeah.”

WHAT can I tell you this Holy Week that you’ve NEVER HEARD before? If you come to **all** the special services this week – and I certainly encourage you to do that! – DON’T COME expecting to hear something **new** and **startling**. EVERY church service – **every sermon throughout** the year **MUST takes us** to Jesus’ cross and empty grave. They may be VERY FAMILIAR SIGHTS and **truths** but they should always have us **“rejoicing greatly.”**

So looking now at these **familiar** verses I encourage you AS ZECHARIAH did – **“Rejoice greatly!”** Rejoice greatly – Jesus is the KING WE NEED! Jesus is our King 1)who is always in control, 2)who is ever faithful to His Word and 3)who comes to save sinners.

I. Our king who is always in control.

It was DANGEROUS for Jesus to be so publicly riding that donkey into town. Word was out that the chief priests **wanted to arrest** Jesus. They had already decided that Jesus **needed to be STOPPED** – SILENCED – **killed!** Common sense said Jesus should **stay far away** from Jerusalem. But Jesus was DETERMINED **to go knowing full well** what was **all in store** for Him. Jesus had repeatedly told His disciples, **“We’re going up to Jerusalem and I will be betrayed – mocked – flogged – crucified.”** Jesus had also repeatedly promised them, **“And on the third day I will be raised to life.”**

Jesus made a GRAND ENTRY into Jerusalem. Oh, He didn’t come with **great POMP** and PAGEANTRY but **“humble – gentle – lowly.”** He didn’t come riding a PRANCING war horse but a common donkey – a BORROWED one **at that**. Jesus had no MILITARY ESCORT of **soldiers** and **chariots**. Jesus is not your TYPICAL **earthly** king – even as He would tell Pilate on Friday, **“My kingdom is not of this world.”**

We’re never told WHICH TWO but Jesus sent two of His disciples to **fetch** the donkey. He tells them EXACTLY WHERE **to find** it. He doesn’t tell them to FIRST GET PERMISSION **to take** the donkey. If anyone questioned them they were to simply say, **“The Lord needs it and will send it back without delay.”** Did those two disciples feel funny just GOING AND TAKING the donkey **without the owner’s** OK? We’re just told that they FOUND things exactly as Jesus had said - that they did and said exactly AS JESUS had told them to.

“Rejoice greatly” as you see Jesus AWARE of and IN CONTROL of **all** these **little details** – yes, in control also of ALL that was going to happen this week! Riding that donkey Jesus didn’t look VERY IMPRESSIVE. **This week** as He’s arrested – **mocked** – **scourged** – **crucified** Jesus will look more like a HELPLESS VICTIM and not like the KING WE NEED. Don’t let appearances fool you this week! Jesus COULD HAVE called down **“twelve legions of angels”** to protect Him. He **could have**

STOPPED all this – He **could have** come down from His cross. Jesus is the almighty Son of God Himself **in the flesh**. Jesus had but He DIDN'T USE His **almighty power to stop** this week. “For us and our salvation” Jesus **“humbled Himself and became obedient unto death – even death on a cross!”**

So **“rejoice greatly!”** Jesus is exactly the King WE NEED. We're not in control. There's so much of life that is TOTALLY OUT of **our control**. We don't have all the **answers**. We can't fix or solve every problem. WE'RE NOT GOD - but Jesus is! Jesus WAS in control all through Holy Week and He's STILL in control of **all things**. **“Sitting at the right hand”** of the Father Jesus is not sitting around TWIDDLING His thumbs but ruling and working ALL things for **His glory** and the **eternal good** of His people. That's exactly the KING WE NEED!

II. Our King who is ever faithful to His Word.

There's Jesus riding that donkey. Mark doesn't mention it but **that was done** to fulfill Zechariah's prophecy in the OT reading. Matthew and John make that point. John also added, **“At first, His disciples did not understand these things. But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about Him.”** **“Rejoice greatly!”** Jesus is our King ever faithful to His Word.

Faithful – that means TRUE TO His Word – trustworthy – **dependable** – **reliable**. We may roll our eyes when we hear candidates and **politicians promising** us this, that and everything else – but what's your TRACK RECORD on **being faithful** and **true to your word**? **How many times** have you told God you're “SORRY” about whatever and then you go and do it all over again – AND AGAIN some more? **Some** of the OT prophets compare sin to being UNFAITHFUL to God – to spiritual adultery and CHEATING on God. It's a picture that brings home the PAIN and BETRAYAL behind our sins. We tell God we “**love**” Him. According to the **very first** commandment God is to be our TRUE LOVE – our ONE AND ONLY love. But every time we LISTEN to the devil – **every time** we go along with the **world's ways** or cater to our **sinful natures** – we're being UNFAITHFUL to God – we're betraying God and cheating on Him.

“Rejoice greatly” – Jesus is the KING WE NEED – ever faithful to His **Word** and **promises**. Think HOW OFTEN in the **gospels** and especially in **Holy Week** we hear the words, **“This happened in order to fulfill...”** SAVOR those words! **“Rejoice greatly”** in that truth. WHATEVER Jesus promises us we can confidently trust Him to do – NO MATTER how impossible or **unlikely** it may seem. DON'T TRUST your instinct – your feelings. **Trust JESUS** – our ever-faithful King – the KING WE NEED!

III. Our King who comes to save sinners.

Jesus received QUITE THE WELCOME that first Palm Sunday. Jerusalem and the **surrounding area** was packed with Passover pilgrims. When you put together the **four gospel accounts** of Palm Sunday you LEARN that there were crowds “following” Jesus – crowds “going ahead” of Jesus – and crowds that **“went out** (from Jerusalem) **to meet”** Jesus. People hailed Jesus as **“the prophet from Galilee.”** They've heard about His miracles and how He had recently raised Lazarus from the dead.

No doubt SOME in those crowds were curious spectators NOT SURE WHAT to make of Jesus. Some trusted in Jesus as the **long-promised** Savior. And others were looking to Jesus for the WRONG things. Many Jews wanted Jesus AS A KING to drive out their **hated Roman** conquerors. **They wanted** Jesus AS A KING to do His **mighty miracles** – to solve their problems – to heal their sicknesses – to give them an **easy**, CAREFREE life. People looking for that from Jesus will NOT be **“greatly rejoicing”** but will instead be **greatly disappointed**. Were ANY of these people who shouted their **“Hosannas!”** today part of the crowd shouting, **“Crucify Him!”** on Friday? Perhaps but we're NEVER TOLD that. We do know HOW FICKLE and **faithless** people can be.

As we see Jesus ride into Jerusalem let's clearly understand Jesus' mission and we WILL **“greatly rejoice.”** Jesus is the KING WE NEED for He comes to save sinners. **“Hosanna!”** the crowds were shouting. **“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”**

“Hosanna” is a Hebrew word that originally meant, “Save now! Please save!” It became an EXCLAMATION of praise – **praising** the one who comes to help/save. God had promised King David a Son who would reign forever – be an ETERNAL King. **In other words**, the Messiah would come from David's family. To “come in the name of the Lord” is not just to be SENT by God and BACKED by God. Think of what the 2nd Commandment teaches us about God's **“name”** – that it's everything God tells us about Himself in the Bible. God's **“name”** is His REPUTATION as it's revealed in His Word. To “come in the name of the Lord” is to come as **“the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, forgiving wickedness, sin and rebellion. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished.”** God is HOLY and righteous – GRACIOUS and forgiving – and so Jesus comes AS OUR KING to save sinners.

SO **“rejoice greatly”** – Jesus came to save sinners. This week the CROSS LOOMS LARGE before us. But let's not forget that this is just ONE WEEK in Jesus' life of **33 years** here on earth. We need all those years AS MUCH AS we need **this week**. EVERY DAY of those 33 years Jesus was busy saving sinners. Jesus **was busy** PERFECTLY loving – **perfectly trusting** – **perfectly obeying** His heavenly Father. Jesus had been busy LIVING FOR US that **perfect life we owed** God but never could live. That perfect love – trust – obedience NOW TOOK Jesus to the cross. **“He was obedient unto death – even death on a cross.”** Carrying the sins of the whole world **there on** the cross Jesus was punished in our place. **There on** the cross the sinless Son of God was sacrificed as the innocent **“Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”** There on the cross Jesus shed His precious blood and gave His body into death **“for the forgiveness”** of all our sins. **“Rejoice greatly”** – our forgiveness is an ACCOMPLISHED, HISTORICAL FACT. Christ has DIED! Christ is risen! Christ will soon come again!

“Rejoice greatly” – Jesus is the KING WE NEED who not only came to save sinners but who still comes to save us. Jesus no longer comes RIDING on a donkey. He comes to save us THROUGH His Word and Sacraments. Through His WORD – at the FONT – in His SUPPER Jesus comes to us PERSONALLY and INDIVIDUALLY with His love and **forgiveness** – His peace and **promises** – His comfort – **guidance** – **encouragement**. WHAT A REASON to treasure and look forward to **church** every week and **those devotions** during the week. WHAT A REASON to faithfully use this week's special services to BASK in our Savior's presence and grow in our faith. WHAT A REASON to **“rejoice greatly”** – Jesus is the KING WE NEED. Amen.

Hymn #749 in the CW-S