

King of Glory Lutheran Church  
April 9/10, 2022  
Year C: Palm Weekend: Luke 19:28-40  
Rev. Debra Abbott

***Luke 19:28-40***

*<sup>28</sup> After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.*

*<sup>29</sup> When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” <sup>32</sup> So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup> They said, “The Lord needs it.” <sup>35</sup> Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.*

*<sup>36</sup> As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup> As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!”*

*<sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” <sup>40</sup> He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”*

In the last two weeks the red carpet has been rolled out for all kinds of celebrities and superstars. First for the Oscars on March 27 and then for the Grammys on April 3.

Now I am very rarely familiar with all the movies and albums, actors and artists that are nominated. But I am fascinated by the red carpet. Famous people dressed to impress, posing for pictures and interviewed as they pass by. Year after year I check out what everyone is wearing and marvel at our fascination with celebrities and designer gowns, and then I go back to doing the dishes or folding my ordinary clothes, the very opposite of the red carpet experience.

What is it that makes us roll out the red carpet and stop and stare at famous people? It seems like people have been doing this for a long, long time.

Today we heard the story of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. There wasn't a red carpet but instead palm branches and coats carpeting the road. And there were people there excited and shouting, hoping for a glimpse of Jesus.

Imagine yourself there that day in the city of Jerusalem packed with vendors and pilgrims, revolutionaries and authorities, adults and children, all side by side. There were all kinds of people gathered together in Jerusalem as Jesus entered the city on that day.

Today we remember best the crowd that greeted Jesus. A crowd that included people who had seen miracles performed by Jesus and wanted to see more. Other people who wanted to see the man they had heard about. See for themselves if Jesus was the Son of God. Some of the people there that day probably just wanted to see someone famous who might put on a good show.

And as it was the time of Passover, Jerusalem was full to bursting with people crowding the city for the festival. Men, women and children gathered together to remember and celebrate their liberation from Egypt.

With the crowds came the vendors intent on making a good profit at Passover – selling all the goods needed to celebrate Passover like lambs, matzah and bitter herbs and meet the basic needs of the travelers.

Then there were the revolutionaries, those who were determined to overthrow the Romans. Year after year during Jesus' lifetime Jerusalem was the scene of riots and revolts. These people were hoping for a great military leader and the overthrow of an oppressive government.

And then there are the Pharisees named in our gospel reading today who were cautious, not wanting to upset the Romans or jeopardize their own power. On this day they want Jesus to quiet the crowds who cheer for him.

And what about Pilate? He came from Caesarea to Jerusalem for Passover in order to keep tabs on things every year. His entrance would have been grand and spectacular. An entrance meant to impress the people with his power and prestige.

And then there was the whole multitude of the disciples who were praising God for all they had seen Jesus do, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.” They envisioned a king who would bring glory and power to the people.

So many people in Jerusalem, each with their own plan for Jesus. Each with their own ideas about who Jesus was and what he should do. Some of whom were certainly looking for a king, savior or celebrity. And some who wanted to stop him from becoming one.

If you had been there that day in Jerusalem as Jesus entered the city what would you have been thinking? What would you have been hoping for? What would your plan for Jesus have been?

Would you have been anxious to catch a glance of Jesus and maybe see a miracle or two? Or would you be there hoping that Jesus would take over Jerusalem and make your life better?

Like the people crowded together in Jerusalem, it may be that each one of us here today has our own plan for Jesus, our own idea of who he should be and what he should do for us.

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” The disciples cry. “Hosanna!” The crowds cry.

And yet, this Jesus will not be the king, savior or celebrity that the crowd is expecting.

Attaining celebrity status was never a part of Jesus’ plan. He never holds a sword or commands an army. He has no earthly possessions or palaces. He rides into town on a donkey. Not a warrior or celebrity, but a humble preacher, teacher and healer.

Jesus is not like any king we know, not like any celebrity we are fascinated by, not like any savior we think we need.

Jesus did not come to earth to be like the kings and celebrities we know.

Instead, Jesus comes to us in humility and peace and love. He serves and suffers and sacrifices for us.

Jesus walked this earth and lived among us not for his own glory. Not for riches or power. He came to us that we might know forgiveness from our sin, that he might restore all that is broken, that he might give new life from death.

What will we see in the next few days during this Holy Week? Jesus will go from this triumphant entrance into Jerusalem to demands for his execution from the very same crowd. And he will do so as a humble servant, not interested in glamour or fame or power.

On the night in which he was betrayed, the day we call Maundy Thursday, Jesus took the place of a servant and washed the disciples' feet. Then he offered the disciples bread and wine, a new covenant, and the forgiveness of sins.

Then Jesus was betrayed, put on trial and condemned to death. On Good Friday we remember Jesus as he was nailed to the cross, offering words of forgiveness, then giving up his life for us.

And when we go to the tomb looking for him early on Easter morning, Jesus will not be there.

Jesus shows us exactly who he is this Holy Week as he enters Jerusalem, when he washes the feet of the disciples and shares a meal, promises forgiveness and gives up his life on the cross.

It is tempting to go from the red carpet today, this joyful entrance into Jerusalem, straight to Easter morning. But Jesus invites us to follow him on his journey this week. For it is at the cross that we meet our God who gave everything for us, became human for us, suffered and died for us, overcame death and the grave for us.

Follow Jesus this week, not in hopes of seeing a celebrity, but to experience and know Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Amen.