

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us today is found in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew the twenty-first chapter beginning at the first verse, and we read in Jesus' name:

*Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. <sup>3</sup> "And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." <sup>4</sup> All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: <sup>5</sup> "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the*

*foal of a donkey.'"* <sup>6</sup> *So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. <sup>8</sup> And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" <sup>10</sup> And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" <sup>11</sup> So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."*

Heavenly Father, these are Your words and therefore they are the truth. We pray, Lord, that You would increase our faith through them. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

A similar story to the Entrance of Jesus happened in Second Samuel (2 Samuel) chapter 6. After David had become king in Judah and Israel, David decided it was time to go and get the Ark of the Covenant and bring it into Jerusalem. As he brought the Ark into the town, we are told that ‘all the house of Israel’ was with David shouting and celebrating as the Ark was brought into the city.

As they were bringing in the Ark David, as some would accuse him, began to act very “unkingly.” He was dancing and very happy with what was being done... yet, he had his detractors who felt he was being irreverent and acting out of sort. But David did not care and told his biggest detractor, his wife, “And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you

have spoken, by them I will be held in honor.”

Coming back to Jesus, we can see many similarities in the account of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem and the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant. Some people were thrilled Jesus was coming, others were quite angry. Some knew Jesus as the Savior and Messiah, others did not know Him. The Ark came in to singing and dancing, Jesus came in to praising and shouting. However, the Ark came in to sit in judgment over the people... Jesus came in to be the king of grace over the people. Yes, as Jesus came into Jerusalem He came for one reason, so that He could be *our king*.

Please remember that the Ark of the Covenant was the place where God sat on the mercy seat beneath the wings of the cherubim. And once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest went into the

holy of holies to sprinkle blood on the ark to make atonement for the people.

We also remember that as they were first bringing the Ark into the city, when someone stumbled and reached out and touched the Ark... he died. Previous to that when the Ark was captured by the Philistines, it caused plagues and boils to appear on the people... and they got rid of the Ark. The Ark of the Covenant, arguably, symbolizes the judgment of God, after all the first covenant, the Ten Commandments, was placed inside of this Ark.

You see, it is important to remember and know all of this because look at the reaction it received as it was being brought into the city. When David brought the Ark into the city he was sacrificing animals before it as it went down the road, all the people came out to see it enter into their town, the people were singing and playing instruments and

were generally excitable as, ultimately, judgment, the first covenant with God, came into the town.

And so too are we. We are very excited when the the first covenant and its law is presented to us and at times we actually really like the law... because each of us has a little Pharisee living within our hearts. Our Old Adam loves to hear the law, because then it thinks that it can fulfill it and earn its own way into heaven. Our Old man looks at the law, and though it sees its faults, it thinks that now there is something to hold on to. If I can just fulfill this law, if I can just make right with God, if I can just earn my way into heaven then all will be right.

As C.F.W. Walther says, “***The reason so many people assume that the are really good Christians is because their parents reared them to be miserable Pharisees. Their parents never made them aware of***

*the fact that they are poor, miserable sinners.*” And when our Old man thinks this way... he hears the law and wants to fulfill it; the old man hears the judgment of God and thinks they are trifles which anyone can overcome... However, he does not know that he is falling further and further into his own sin and damnation.

Yes, when we hear the law and judgment we should have fear and dread knowing that we too have committed this sin and for it we deserve nothing but hell and damnation for all eternity... but we often do not. When we hear the law we allow it to enter into our ears and that is as far as it gets. We hear that we should not break God’s commandments, at times we ignore. We hear that we should fear and love God above all things, but then we remember our spouses and children and houses and... We hear that when we transgress the law we should suffer hell and, sadly, we often pay it little attention. We

hear God’s laws and God’s judgment and we, at times, can pay it little mind.

The Ark of the Covenant was entering into Jerusalem and in its wake left death and destruction to those who mistreated it... and the people were excited. And if we continue to think that we can fulfill God’s holy Law, if we think that God will not enter into judgment with us for failing to uphold every point of His law, we are mistaken.

Yet, as Jesus enters into Jerusalem in our text... there are some of His disciples and some from the city but not like those who came out to see the Ark. As the Ark entered into the city everyone knew what it was and they were glad to see it... as Jesus entered into the city, Matthew tells us that some asked, “Who is this?”

The judgment of God, the law of God comes and people are excited... the Son of God, the

Gospel comes, and people are oblivious. Yes some knew Jesus... but 'the city' did not know Him. And is this still not a problem in our own nation and time? People know the law, it is on each person's heart, but to know Jesus... that is not something that can be learned from the law nor from judgment and thus many go without Him.

Many go without Jesus, their Savior. Jesus who came into this world for the sole purpose of living a perfect life, suffering during His life and being nailed to a cross, dying for the sins of all mankind and rising from the dead... and still not all know Him. Jesus did everything that you and I cannot do: He fulfilled the law perfectly for each and every one of us, He did it in humility, He did it so that He would redeem (buy back) each and every sinner from the pit of hell. Jesus did this so that you would never have to experience one moment of dread and terror. Jesus did this so that you would never

have to know the pain and agony that He suffered through. Jesus did this because He loves you and because He wanted to.

Jesus came into our world not to be served but to serve, and He served each and every one of us. He served us as He lived a hard life being tempted on all sides and never giving in to those temptations. He served us as He endured mockings, beating, and agony so that we would never know them. He served us when He hung on the cross bearing all of our sins upon Himself. He served us by dying for us. Jesus came to serve us... and yet we know that Palm Sunday is all about Jesus as our King.

Yes, friends, our King came into this world to serve us and to save us. The Ark came into Jerusalem with the Ten Commandments and was brought in with pomp and circumstance from the king and from the people... Jesus was brought into the city in

humbleness, He rode on a donkey, He was  
flocked by just His followers, and there were  
many who knew Him not. Jesus came into  
Jerusalem, still not to be served but to serve.  
As Jesus entered into Jerusalem He knew  
His life was very near its end.

And still to this day Jesus comes to you in  
lowliness and humility. He does not come  
with great peal of thunder and loud trumpet  
blasts; rather, Jesus comes to you in words  
found on paper in a book that is thousands of  
years old. Jesus comes to you in water and  
words which is sprinkled upon you to make  
you a child of God. Jesus comes to you in  
bread and wine, which when combined with  
the word of God we receive the body and  
blood of Christ for the forgiveness of all of  
our sins.

As we continue in this final week of our  
Savior's earthly life I pray that we can take  
time to recognize all that is happening

around us. Instead of focusing on the law  
and judgment and paying homage to that and  
to the hell it brings us... may we focus our  
attention on Jesus Christ and Him crucified  
and risen for all of our sins. Yes, Jesus'  
earthly life is near its end and definitely hits  
a crescendo on this day, on Palm Sunday, but  
may we continue our focus on Him as He  
continues on His 'downward' path this  
week... knowing that in seven short days we  
will be gathering together to praise our God  
and our Savior Jesus Christ for rising from  
the dead for us.

As Johann Gerhard said about this text,  
***“Finally, both those who went before Christ  
and those who followed Him with a loud  
voice simultaneously petitioned God the  
Lord that He would increase and  
strengthen the Kingdom of the Messiah.  
They did not allow themselves to be  
offended at the humble appearance of His  
kingdom. Nor did they allow themselves to***

*be frightened off by the threats of the Pharisees. That's what we should also do. We should confess Christ and His kingdom without regard to any offences and threats. We should thank God the Lord from the bottom of our hearts for the fact that Christ has also initiated His kingdom of grace among us, and we should pray from the heart for it to be upheld and spread. Whoever is a true member of the kingdom of Christ will also most assuredly offer heartfelt prayer for it to be upheld."*

Thanks be to God. Amen.