



Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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April 1, 2007
Palm Sunday
Luke 19:28-40
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Zechariah 9:9, 10
Psalm of the Day: Psalm 24
Second Lesson: Philippians 2:5-11
Gospel: Luke 19:28-40

Praise Your King!

The things you really enjoy in life, the things you love, let's say the sports team that you love—whether it's the Packers, the Cubs, the Twins, the Bears, the Vikings, there are a number of different favorite teams in this class, right? If you really love a sports team, how do you show it? How do you praise your sports idols? What do you do? You maybe go buy a jersey or something, right? You watch the games on TV and scream and holler at the television. You throw things around at the television. You throw your hat down at a bad ref's call or things like that—maybe some of the things you've seen your parents do once or twice.

You maybe praise things in different ways when it comes to things like that. You try to get their autograph. You collect their cards. You learn all you can. You read about them. Maybe it isn't a sports team. Maybe it's a singer. Maybe it's a movie star. Maybe it's something else. There are different ways that we praise things all the time.

In the gospel that I just read to you, we see a lot of people praising God. And after you have spent these years learning about who God is and what he has done for you and also learning who you are and how desperately you need God to do that for you, there is a desire in your hearts, in the new self, to praise God, to praise your Savior King, to praise your humble Savior King. So this morning as we look at these words, we are going to learn something about how we praise our humble Savior King.

We praise him by trusting that he knows what he is doing because there are going to be plenty of times in your life when you are going to wonder, "Why is God allowing things to happen that are happening?" Trust that he knows the outcome. Trust that he will keep his promise to make everything work for your good. Then also praise God by silencing the stones. We will think about what that means as we look at these words from the gospel of Luke.

When Jesus entered into Jerusalem, he didn't come like a conquering king. He didn't come on a stallion. He didn't come as an overpowering entity. He comes humbled. He shows his incredible power because he gets on a colt, the foal of a donkey that no one had ever ridden, and he rides it through a large crowd, and the colt still lets him ride. He shows his power over one of the creatures he had created. As he does that, it is shown again in a way that you might not notice, that you might take for granted because he is our humble King—the one who sets aside his divine glory so that he can come to Jerusalem to die to take away our sins and to finish living perfectly in our place, which is

what we so desperately need and which is what you guys have learned over the past few years.

This incredible humility of our God is why we want to praise him. It is why we want to live for him. It is why we want to serve him. It is why we rejoice in knowing that even though we are pond scum, God didn't just wipe us off his feet and move on. God changed us. He redeemed us. He made us perfect in his eyes. So now we want to praise him by trusting that he knows what he is doing.

How would you have liked to have been one of those disciples that were sent on to go get a donkey? Just go take that donkey and when someone asks you why you are taking it, say the Lord needs it. Do you think you might have been a little apprehensive? Do you think you might have worried about someone crying thief, or someone getting upset with you? Do you think you might have thought, "How does he know there is going to be a donkey there? How does he know what they are going to ask?" Do you think there might have been a few doubts and uncertainties in that journey to that place to find that colt, that foal of a donkey? Those disciples were sinful human beings just like you and me, so I imagine there was because you and I, as we go through life, we face things—not things like going and finding a donkey that Jesus wants, but we face difficulty because we live in a world filled with sin.

Today you are dressed all in white and it's hard to see some of those truths, right? You look so pretty and so nice. You even bothered to comb your hair this morning. But there are times in life when your hair is going to get messed up so to speak because you are going to face things that you can't understand. You are going to face challenges. You are going to face things where Satan is going to try to make you doubt that God loves you. He is going to whisper in your ear, "If God loves you, he wouldn't let this tragedy or this disaster or this hardship or this heartache into your life." And as you face those things, you have choices to make. You can either rush back into the arms of God and remember again how desperately he loves you and how much he was willing to do for you to take away your sins, and then in there find the comfort and the confidence that he knows what he is doing and we can trust him, or you can rely on your own understanding. And in that case, you will probably be driven away from God. You won't look to him. You might even get angry at him and you might blame him for things.

But here is the incredible truth of our God. Here is how perfect his love is. No matter what we have done, no matter how we have doubted him, no matter how we have blamed him, no matter how we have rebelled against him, no matter how we have thumbed our nose at him, no matter how we have told him to stay out of our lives, we don't want him anymore, he keeps loving us. He keeps longing for us to trust him. He wants to put his arms around us and say, "don't worry. I am with you. It is all going to be okay, because I am greater than any of the troubles that you face." His love is always there to strengthen and sustain you, so trust that he knows what he is doing when you face things in the future that might make you wonder, because they will come.

The one who knew where the donkey was also knows where you are and what you are facing and he will never leave you alone. He will always be there when you look to him.

So trust him—and that is a way you praise him. That is a way you show your love for him by saying, “Lord, I can’t understand everything, but I trust you because you are greater than I am.” So praise your humble Savior King by trusting that he knows what he is doing.

But also praise him by making the stones shut up. You might think you are good at it because you have never heard a stone speak, right? You think you have that one nailed already, right? But look at what Jesus was saying when he said, *“if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out”* (Luke 19:40). The Pharisees were upset because they knew when the people said, “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” When they were speaking all these things, they were saying that Jesus is the Messiah. They were saying that Jesus is the promised Messiah. He is the One who has been prophesied about in Psalm 24 as we sang today, in Zechariah, in Isaiah and in all the other places that you have looked at in Scripture that pointed ahead to the Messiah. These people were saying, “Here he is. That is him.”

The Pharisees didn’t like it because they didn’t want to hear that, so they said, *“Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”* (Luke 19:39). “They shouldn’t be saying those things about you. That is blasphemy! That is wrong! That isn’t right! Shut them up!” Jesus looked them in the eye and said, *“I tell you...if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out”* (Luke 19:40).

So what your Lord is telling you is the way that you can praise him is by keeping stones silent, which means, always be ready, always be able and always be willing to point to Jesus as your Savior. And not only YOUR Savior, but the Savior of the whole world and the people that you will come into contact with. There will be times when you will want to pull back from that. You won’t want to appear like someone that is a “God freak” or something like that. You will be tempted to change the conversation when God comes up, to the weather or the Packers or something else that is completely insignificant in the scheme of things.

Don’t! Tell people about Christ. You have been strengthening your faith to the point where you know who he is and what he has done for you. You know who you are. You know who all the people in this room are. You know how desperately we are sinners and how much we need someone to take away our sins, and you know that Christ is the One.

So as you go through life, you members of this year’s confirmation class, the rest of you here who know that Jesus is your Savior, point people to him. Hold him up before people. Always be ready to give an answer for the hope that you have, but do so with gentleness and respect. Live your life with the goal of keeping stones from screaming out with a piercing shriek, which is literally what that verse says. That is one of the tasks God has given you as a way for you to thank him for his gift of salvation.

So keep the stones silent as you keep Christ in front of others. Those are just a couple of the ways that you can go through your life praising God, but by all means, praise the One who has taught you. Praise the One who has saved you.