



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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April 17, 2011

Palm Sunday

Sermon Text: [Zechariah 9:9-10](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Zechariah 9:9-10](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 118](#)

Second Lesson: [Philippians 2:5-11](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 21:1-11](#)

Live Under Your Humble King

Last Sunday you Confirmands sat up front and had to answer all those questions. I imagine you were a little nervous, right? One thing I've told you over and over is that this is just the milk. You have a life ahead of you of growing and learning more and more about God and getting onto the solid food, as the apostle writes in the New Testament. I don't want you to be swayed by people telling you that last week they couldn't have answered those questions. That's a "them problem." Don't make it a "you problem." For example, I'm going to tell you that you have a lot of growing yet to do and there are a lot of things you can learn.

If I called on one of you right now to give me a brief description of the prophet Zechariah, when he lived, where he was a prophet at, and who he wrote and what his chief concern was in writing his prophecy, do you think you could do it? Anyone else want to help them out? The point being is that even though we put these pretty white gowns on you, stick something that smells kind of good next to your nose on the side of your gown, that little flower, and we give you gifts and act as though now you're done with something, don't fall into that lie. You aren't done with something. Don't be so arrogant as to think you're done with learning about God. If that's your thought, then this becomes a "you problem." Even though you'll stand here and say "I'd rather die than fall away from Jesus," if you don't stay in the Word of God and you don't keep growing in the Word of God, it's a very real possibility that you will fall away from Jesus.

Zechariah's words that have often been used on Palm Sunday are still fitting I think for Confirmation because they tell us, "Don't be arrogant." You're Savior wasn't arrogant. You shouldn't be arrogant. Live under your humble king. Always admit there's more that you can know, more that you can learn, and there's more room for growth in your Christian life. I don't care how long you live, until the day you die, you can always be stronger in your faith tomorrow than you are today. That can be true the rest of your life. You've got the foundation. Now you've got the tools. But you have to make use of those tools to keep growing in your faith.

Foundation and tools...that was part of Zechariah's ministry. He was one of the prophets in Judah after they came back from Babylon. They had spent all that time in Babylon. Now they are coming back. They are rebuilding the temple. They're kind of excited because they knew they had to be in Judah and had to have the temple rebuilt so that Messiah would come. So when they get back, they are kind of expecting that Messiah is going to come soon, but the rebuilding is going slow. It's a long, drawn out

process. The people are kind of getting weary. They are getting worn down by the everyday concerns of rebuilding a life in the Promised Land. So the temple and God and his promises and all those things keep going farther and farther into the background. Zechariah comes along and he tells them about these visions the Lord gave him. He encourages the people, but he encourages the people not by telling them to look at their own belly button, not to look inside of themselves and do better and be better...he encourages them by pointing them to the Savior that was coming.

Any real strength in Christian life, in yours, in mine, in any of ours, has to come from our focus on our humble Savior. That's where the strength comes from. I don't care what we think we do for God. It's nothing compared to what God has done for us.

We just saw something amazing this morning. We saw a Baptism. The amazing part isn't that I got water all over the blanket. That's not the amazing part. The amazing part is that God worked faith in Chloe's heart. He clothes Chloe with the righteousness that Jesus won for the world. He made it hers personally. That's amazing. That's what God does for us. He does the work.

People in Zechariah's day needed to have that reminder. So Zechariah comes and he talks to them. He doesn't talk to them about them, but he talks to them about the Savior. He says, "Look at your Savior. The Savior that is going to be coming to you is absolutely different than any kind of king you've ever thought about." They're still looking for that Messiah that is going to make them like the time of David and the time of Solomon, give them their earthly grandeur and earthly power and earthly prestige. That's what many of them were looking for. These words should have clued them in...it's going to be a little different. "When this king comes, he's not going to establish his kingdom by bigger stronger chariots, bigger stronger bows, bigger stronger armies, bigger stronger weapons. That's not the way the Messiah is going to work. When he comes, he's going to take all the chariots away because that's not what he uses." He tells Peter to put the sword away after Peter tried to pierce the servant's ear, right? He said, "Put it away. That's not how I establish my kingdom. My kingdom is established in a different way, through different tools, with different weapons." The weapons are Word and Sacrament. That's how he is going to come to proclaim peace to the nations. Not a peace as there will never ever be war and death again, but peace in the most important battle, the most important war that there ever has been. Peace because you and I are born, like we said last week, spiritually blind and dead and enemies of God. We are at war with God. Yet Jesus comes to proclaim peace. The perfection that God demands of you and me that we can't give to him, Jesus lived and gave it to us. He credits it to us...God's Great Exchange that we talked about. That peace is that God no longer looks at us and sees our sins. He sees the robes of Jesus' righteousness.

This is why our king is different. He's humble. He doesn't exalt himself. He humbles himself and becomes obedient to death, even death on the cross. Our humble king sets aside his own interests to put ours in front of his own. That's who he is. That's what he does.

As little Christians, it's not all about us. I can tell you that all I want, but the rest of the day is going to be all about you, right? You're going to have a party. You're going to get gifts. You are going to have people tell you, "You look nice. That's a change." You are going to have all kinds of stuff like that, right? Don't let Satan give you a big head and think it's actually all about you. This day for you should still be all about Christ. It's what he has done for you. He's given you this footing. He's given you this solid ground to stand on, this knowledge of the Word of God. Now he says to you, "Use my weapons to go forward and build on it." Use Word and Sacrament and grow. Proclaim peace to yourself and then proclaim peace to the nations.

Our humble king gives us a humble task. That humble task is to put ourselves on the line to share the Law and the Gospel with one another because that isn't always easy. It isn't always fun. But it is fun when you see a person react. It's one of the simple joys that I have as a pastor. It's to see the difference in some of you guys over the years that I have you in Confirmation Class where I don't just let you give me the right answer and then move on but keep asking you why. And to see you when it finally clicks and you can start explaining God's Word and handle God's Word in ways that are correct and appropriate. Anybody can be a parrot. But not everyone can be a peace proclaimer. When you understand why, you can proclaim peace to the nations. That's the task your humble king has given to you. He's told you to do it like he does it. Do it humbly. Don't be arrogant as though you have all the answers. Always go to him for the answers because he is the source of all answers. But proclaim his peace. It's not yours. It's not yours to change. If he said it, that settles it.

That's the task God has given to you. He's given it to all of us. Unfortunately I think we often set aside God's task that he's given us and decide that we have a better task when he calls us to proclaim Law and Gospel to one another and speak to one another directly. We often decide not to. But God calls us to live under our humble king and to serve him in the joy that comes from knowing his love for us forgives us for those times when we've screwed up, for those times when we have sinned and when we will sin. His love surrounds you and his love will not be taken from you. He won't turn his back on you. The only way that you can lose it is if you turn your back on him.

As you continue to go to him in Word and Sacrament, he will strengthen your faith. Then, like we prayed for Chloe, we pray for you today and for all of us that we remain in our Baptismal grace to the day our Savior calls us home.