



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

April 1, 2012  
Palm Sunday, Confirmation  
Sermon Text: [Mark 11:1-10](#)  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Zechariah 9:9, 10](#)  
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 24](#)  
Second Lesson: [Philippians 2:5-11](#)  
Gospel Lesson: [Mark 11:1-10](#)

### **Why Are You Doing This?**

Because of whom your Lord is  
Because he is worthy of praise

Why are you doing this? Think of how many different ways you ask that question or something like it to other people. Maybe, Lord willing, as your mom is teaching you to make coconut cream pie, you ask her why she is doing this or why she is doing that, right? A son is working on a car or fixing something else with his father and he asks the question, why are you doing this? You want to know. Maybe sometimes between spouses you ask the question, why are you doing this, because you are really frustrated with what they are doing, right? It's really driving a wedge in your relationship, so you are trying to figure it out and work it out.

But why are you doing this? I think the question why is always a good question to ask ourselves in almost anything we are doing in our lives. Why are you doing this? I love to ask it in Bible class and I think it's worthy of asking in our daily lives. I think you guys in the white gowns in front, it's an important question for you to be asked today. Why are you doing this?

We'll come back to that in a little bit, but it probably helps us to understand in that Gospel that I read to you a little bit ago from Mark, it's a question they were told some people were going to ask, why are you doing this, when they went to take that colt that had never been ridden on so Jesus could use it for his entry into Jerusalem. As we think about that question and the answer to why are you doing this, they were doing it because of whom Jesus was, who our Lord is. That's why they were doing it. The same thing will apply for you guys. They were doing it because of the praise that he deserved because of who he is. You can't see who Jesus is and yawn at it. You're either going to reject him and say, "I'm going to be alright on my own," which is foolish, or you are going to see that he is only answer to sin in your life, and it's going to change you. That's it. Those are the options.

Think about that...here they are and it's the last time Jesus is going to Jerusalem. They are leaving from Jericho. It's a 17 mile walk. They are going from Jericho up to Jerusalem. Why do they say going up to Jerusalem? Because when you went to Jerusalem from Jericho, you went up 3,500 feet to get to the city at the top of the hill. In

fact, you didn't see the city until you went over the last hill, the Mount of Olives. You wouldn't see it until you got to the top of the Mount of Olives. Then all of a sudden, there is the city right there in front of you.

Think about all these people, all these pilgrims that are going there for the Festival of Passover that they were about to celebrate. After long walks from wherever they came from to get to Jerusalem, when they got to that last hill and saw the city spread out in front of them, do you think some of those Hallel Psalms, the Psalms of Praise that are in Scripture, that they would have sang those and praised God with some gusto because now they are finally there? Their journey is over. If any of you drove here from any distance because you wanted to be here for one of these guys' confirmation, did any of your kids ever say, are we there yet, are we there yet, are we there yet? Of course they did. You can imagine what that was like for them as they were walking. They get to the top of that hill and they are pretty excited.

Now there is a crowd that comes out from Jerusalem because they hear this buzz that Jesus is coming. There is a crowd that is following behind Jesus that is on the way to Jerusalem for the Festival. Jesus knows what's coming. He knows they are almost getting there. And he knows he is going to fulfill prophecy. He is going to fulfill what we read in Zechariah about being a king that is unlike any other king. So he sends his disciple ahead and says, "Just go. There is going to be a colt there, the foal of a donkey, and you're going to take it and untie it. They are going to ask you 'why are you doing this'. You tell them the Lord needs it. He needs it because he has to fulfill Scripture." He has to fulfill all of Scripture. He has to fulfill everything. Not only that, he has to fulfill everything that God demands of you and me.

God does not demand of you to do your best or try hard and everything will be alright. God doesn't demand that you find someone else that you are little bit brighter than or do a little better than. God says "Be perfect as I the Lord your God am perfect." That's his demand of you. I know you guys. You can't do it. But you guys know you don't have to do it, right? You know that someone did it for you. You know that Jesus went into Jerusalem to be a king like no other king, the king that was talked about in [Psalm 118](#) that they quote. "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" All these things they were singing come out of [Psalm 118](#), one of those Hallel Psalms of praise that they would sing when they got close to Jerusalem.

Now they were singing it for a completely different reason, because they believe that this Jesus that is coming is the answer, the One who God had sent, the king unlike any other king. He came and he was perfect. We've looked at that through Lent; all those different wounds that you and I inflict on Jesus. He endured them all. Where you and I have fallen short, he was perfect every last time. He never mocked. He never denied. He never betrayed. He never abandoned anyone else. He was faithful to the end because you and I need it.

We can't do it because what God demands of us we could never fulfill, so he gives it to us as a gift. That's who your Lord is...he is the Promised Savior. That's why when you sit here today in those pretty gowns, you got all dressed up, you put on a tie and you think this is the end of the world because you are wearing a tie and this is just awful. You are doing all these things that you don't usually do, right? You don't do this to come to church. You don't come sit together in the front of church. You don't wear white gowns. You don't do any of this. Why are you doing all this? It's because of who your Savior is.

Maybe you started out coming through my Confirmation class because mom and dad thought it was a good idea. "That's just what we do. You go to Confirmation class. We got you baptized, now you go to Confirmation class. That's what you do." I don't care if that's why you started. When you are sitting here today, you know a better reason why you did this, right? You know who your Savior is. You know the incredible love he has for you. You know how much you don't deserve it, yet you know he gives it to you, and he promises to give it to you day after day after day after day. That's who your Lord is.

In the time that you've been sitting in the class and you've been digging into God's Word, you've learned to shed your parrot feathers and start thinking and applying God's Word in the right way and using it and digging into it and thinking and being all the Lord wants you to be. You see a difference in why you do these things. It isn't because mom or dad or grandma or grandpa want you to be here. That better not be why you're here. It's because you love your Savior. You know who he is. And you know what he is worthy of.

You don't have to take your gowns off and put them in front of Jesus because he's not here in the body anymore. You don't have to grab some palm branches, even though you did and brought them to the front of church this morning. That's a great way and a neat way to do it and it's a wonderful way that we remember this special day, but the praise that he is looking for from you and from me and from all his people now is not just going through the motions, not just saying the right thing at the right time, it's not just doing what needs to be done, but doing it for the right reason. It's the praise that comes from knowing who he is, believing that he is the only Savior from sin and saying, "Lord, I want to live for you. I want to thank you for what you've given me."

As a Christian, there is a part of you that wants to offer him praise. The only problem is, you've also got a sinful nature, and your sinful nature gets bored with Jesus. You're sinful nature gets bored with the Word and with the Sacraments. You're sinful nature is a problem. So if you want to keep praising this God who has done so much for you in all your life, you need to stay connected to Word and Sacrament. You need to get a strength that comes from outside of you. That strength is what God gives to you. He gives it to you through Word and Sacrament.

Your sinful nature...what do we say? What does sin make us? The opposite of smart, right? Stupid. Sin makes us think God is boring and God is dull. That's sin. The fact that God loved you so much that he was willing to die for you, the fact that God loved

you so much that he gave you the Holy Spirit to believe that he is your Savior, that isn't boring. It never will be. But your sinful nature will always try to convince you it is. Don't buy what he is selling! Go to a different counter. Shop where God gives you his love and his grace and his forgiveness.

Let that move you to praise him. Let that move you to serve him, not because you have to, not because if you don't do it someone else won't and it has to get done. You don't serve God because of that. You don't do it to do your fair share. You do it because Jesus lived and died in your place and you want to thank him for that kind of love. That's power. That's what you have to be tapped into. That's what we all have to be tapped into. If we don't tap into it, that's an "us" problem. It isn't a God problem.

Live to praise your God. Live to serve him, not because you have to, not because mom or dad might be upset with you, not because grandma or grandpa might be upset with you, not because pastor might stand over you and make you nervous, right Jenna? Do it because you have an amazing Savior who loves you that much. Always stay connected to him and that praise will flow naturally. It won't be forced. It will be natural. And you will be blessed. That's pretty cool, right?