

DCF:

You know what’s really hard during the season of Lent? No, not giving something up. For me, the hardest thing in Lent is not saying “Alleluia.” Traditionally, we’ve eliminated that from our worship service as a way of being reminded of Jesus’ suffering and death. I understand that and appreciate it.

But it’s hard today. We see Jesus riding into Jerusalem. All those people are shouting and praising God, shouting alleluia at the top of their lungs. And we can’t. It’s like being at a Packers game and not cheering, surrounded by thousands of people who are.

Ok, we can’t say alleluia out loud, but we can praise God in our hearts. Lift up your hearts in joy with me today as we see “**OUR CONQUERING SAVIOR COME!**” Oh, what a thrill to see Him come as the King of peace as He brings glory to God. Maybe our voices can’t say alleluia, but our hearts can.

Part One: He comes as the King of peace

This is the beginning of the end. In the battle for our eternal salvation, this is the 2 minute warning of the fourth quarter. Things are now coming to the ultimate conclusion. Jesus had spend over 30 years on this earth crafting a perfect life. He had lived under God’s Law, obeying every single command that God had laid down for human beings. Since Jesus is God, that perfect life is big enough to cover every human being’s sinful life. Now, it’s time to pay for our sins, to wash them all away. Now, it’s time for Jesus to enter Jerusalem and die.

As we see the events of that first Palm Sunday, we can’t help but notice all the things that prove Jesus is true God. He knows what the future will hold. He tells his disciples where the colt is, what to say to the owner and what will happen. He also shows us His power. He controls this colt that had never been ridden. He calms it while riding it through a crowd of people shouting at the top of their lungs, palm branches waving and coats being tossed in front of it. Jesus makes sure that the Old Testament prophecy of Zechariah comes true. Today, we remember our Savior, true man and true God, entering the city of Jerusalem.

Jesus came, not as a victim, but as a conqueror. The people knew what was happening. They, too, knew of the Zechariah prophecy and hailed Him as a king. “**Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!**” They threw their cloaks down in front of Him as He rode. Now, cloaks weren’t throw away garments back then. They were expensive. The people, by doing this, were showing their submission to Jesus. They expected Jesus to complete His mission as their King. And, so did Jesus. He knew why He had come. He knew what He was going to. He knew that He would do it. He had come to bring peace to His people.

Ah, but what kind of peace? There’s the rub, as Shakespeare once wrote. Jesus had not come to bring peace between earthly nations. He never intended to do so. He also didn’t come to bring peace between us and Satan or sin. There can be no truce between our Lord and sin. Neither is God interested in compromising with sin or death. He never has and never will.

Jesus came to bring us peace where it really counted - between us and God. That can only be accomplished when God’s justice is satisfied, when sin is paid for. Of course, we can’t satisfy God’s demand of perfection. We need a King to fight for us, a King to win us peace with God. That’s the battle that Jesus rode into Jerusalem to win. And He did. His suffering and death washes away our sin and makes us right in God’s eyes. His sacrifice for us makes it possible for us to enjoy peace, eternal peace, with our heavenly Father. Oh, how wonderful that we see our conquering Savior riding into Jerusalem to fight and win for us!

Now, before we just gloss over His entrance, notice something important. Jesus comes to us, not the other way around. He takes the initiative, not us. We did not invite Him into our lives. We did not choose Him. We did not go to Him and ask Him to fight for us. Oh, no. We were dead in our trespasses and sins. We were hostile to Him and wanted nothing to do with Him. We were like those Pharisees who wanted Jesus to tell His disciples to be quiet. We were like a six year old who gets a savings bond for his birthday. It’s just a piece of paper to him. In his mind, it’s worthless. You can’t play with it. You can’t eat it. What good is it? But later on, as he grows up and learns about savings bonds, he realizes it’s valuable. Without faith, Jesus’ sacrifice means nothing to us. Without faith, we have dead sinful souls.

And yet, because he loved us unlovable people, He came and fought for us. He won for us eternal peace, a peace we so desperately need.

His work not only brings peace to us, but also brings glory to God.

Part Two: He comes to bring glory to God

Glory is either something that shows God's power and love or something that brings honor to God. The people that were there on that first Palm Sunday certainly honored God. They gave Him glory by what they said. They waved palm branches, they threw their cloaks at His feet, they praised Him with these words: ***"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"***

Ooh, that just frosted the Pharisees! Notice how they dissed Jesus. They didn't call Him king. They didn't call Him the Christ, or Messiah or Lord or even rabbi. No, they just called Him "teacher". With this subtle slam, they let Him know they didn't think He was any better than the thousands of other teachers in Jerusalem. They didn't like what the people were shouting, so they told Jesus to make them be quiet.

Hah! Like that's going to happen. You can't silence God. You can't stop God from showing His glory, exhibiting His power. If He wants something to happen, it will happen. God had promised that this would happen, and if the people wouldn't have said these words, God would have made the stones themselves shout out the truth. This is the conquering Savior. This is the King of peace.

Glory and praise to God will eventually come out. You can't silence God. You will see His power and glory sooner or later. If we refuse to see it here on this earth, we will be forced to see it on Judgment Day. Then all the glory, the power, the honor, the praise that He has and deserves will be evident to all. To God be the glory, great things He has done!

Oh, how clear is God's glory - something that shows His power and brings Him honor - in Jesus Christ. How awesome to contemplate the fact that God had all sin paid for in the suffering and death of Jesus! How inconceivably wonderful is the fact that Jesus suffered hell for every single sin that we have committed! Our sins of greed. Our sins of laziness. Our sin of ignoring His commands and doing what we want to do, not what God wants us to do. Jesus brings God blazing glory by suffering for the sins of all people before they asked Him to do so. He steps right into history and saves people that couldn't save themselves or even ask God to do it. That's glory, my friends. Glory in the person of Jesus Christ.

There's even more glory floating around today, glory that's found sitting in your chair. Yes, that's right. You are God's glory. You show the power of God and His love. You, being a believer, brings honor and praise to God. Yes, you! Yes, the person sitting right there, the one that was dead in sin, the one that couldn't choose to believe in Jesus, the one that was hostile to God and all He stands for. You are the one that Jesus chose to be His own. You are the one that He sent the Holy Spirit into. You are the one that He adopted into His family. You are a vessel of the Holy Spirit, someone that simply by being a believer gives glory to our Lord.

How then, can we not praise our Lord? I mean, we'd praise a billionaire if he built us a brand new house, furnished it with top quality furniture and appliances, and then gave it to us free and clear. We'd give interviews thanking and praising him. We'd tell our friends and feel just so lucky that the billionaire chose to give us that wonderful house to live in. If we'd act that way towards another human being, how would, how should we act towards the One that has given us a mansion in heaven? How are we to act, what are we to do, knowing that eternal peace is ours? To God be the glory, the honor, the praise, the credit, the thanks, the love.

Now, I know it's hard for us to do that today. After all, we're in the season of Lent and we don't sing the Alleluia like we normally would. We can't shout at the top of our lungs ***"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*** We want to, don't we? Soon. Soon we will raise our voices and shout alleluia! Soon we will praise and glorify our conquering hero.

Can't wait til next Sunday, can you?

AMEN