

Well, good morning everyone. I had a delicious breakfast this morning. Thank you to those who prepared it. I always tell people this. Come bring something to share.

I never do. I always show up like a schlub and just eat what everyone else has made. And there always seems to be plenty. So I've not yet felt guilty about it. Now, if I need to feel guilty about it, let me know afterwards.

Not right now. But here's what I'm saying. If you've not joined us for fifth Sunday breakfast, please do. It is so much fun. We have a chance to get to know people we don't know.

I'm telling you, it's awkward for some. Matt Kanhoye always tries to find the furthest corner. I think he hid behind the nursing mother's closet this morning to avoid talking to people. But if you're just slightly more social than Matt, then you would love this. It's a great time.

We've got our kids with us this morning. Kids, on the count of three, just shout your name really loud so I know who's in the room. 1, 2, 3.

Is that the loudest these kids can get? Our children's teachers have taught them so well. Kids, the rules are different in here. You can actually make some noise appropriately. On the count of three, really loud.

Your name, so I know who's here. 1, 2, 3. Cora. Zeke. I see Zeke is here.

Is that the only one? Theo. Did I not hear your name at all? No. Theo.

Theo's like Matt Kanhoye. He's not going to shout at all. We're glad you are here today. We're talking about parades. Maybe you guys like a parade.

These people all like parades. How about you guys? Parades, anyone? What do you like about a parade? Just shout it out.

Candy. Candy. Okay, Candy. Let's just get that out of the way. Candy.

Candy. What else? The bands? Yeah, what else? Floats.

We love floats. Anyone else?

The military stuff. Yeah. It's always nice to see our men and women in the armed forces showing up for that. Anyone else got some favorite parade, parade item? I think we pretty much.

The Granch always shows up at our Christmas parades for some reason.

He's very popular. There's all kinds of different parades. We were driving this morning and my friend Wyatt was talking. He goes to Mitchell High School and they do something called the senior parade where all the seniors drive something.

It could be a four wheeler, it could be a dirt bike, it could be a truck, it could be a sports car. But they all show up and they. The senior seniors have a Parade on the Is. Why is it the last day of school? When do they do that?

Why? It's not talking to me. Why? It's like, why are you calling my name out in the church service right now? Anyway, Lots of different.

Lots of different parades. I love the floats, the marching bands. I love seeing people. I always see people at a parade that I've not seen all year long, and you just run across them in these. In these odd moments.

I love a parade. You. You love a parade. There's another type of parade. There's what's called a military parade.

And these are parades that kings, our leaders do. They do, like military, big royal parades. Kings love a parade. Now, when you think of a king, kids, what do you think of? This is kids.

I mean, anyone under the age of 60, what do you think of when you think of a king? What's the picture? A crown. Very good, Brian. What else?

Robe. Okay. Very good.

What? A staff. Like a scepter? Yes.

Throne. Very good. Castle. Oh, yeah. I love the castles.

I love the castles. Here's a picture that we've got of a king. You recognize that guy? He looks diminutive there in some way. I feel like the proportions are off a little bit.

But you see, he's got the crown, he's got the scepter, he's got the robe. He's sitting on the throne. He's got this little orb thing. I don't know what that's about. That's the king.

His name is King Charles. He's the king of England. Now, you may not think about parades when you think about kings, but kings love a good parade. So there's a couple of. There's a couple of pictures here of some royal parades.

Can we show. Oh, there we go. So there. So what do you see in that picture? You see guys on big, strong war horses.

You see some tanks in the background. You see the soldiers all lined up. I feel like this is a conglomeration of, like, China and England and, I don't know. And confetti. The New York Times parade.

This is a weird AI generated photo. You just never know what you're going to get with this. But this is a good sort of picture of what these military parades illustrates, what a military parade can be about. You've got crowns with kings. You've got palaces and then military parades where you.

You see the weaponry. Maybe some planes, maybe some big tanks. I love a parade. But today our lesson is about a different type of parade for a different type of king. And it doesn't look much like any of the pictures that we have seen so far.

So here's how Matthew in the Gospel of Matthew, which is the very first book in the New Testament. And if you're using your Bible for the first time or not after a long time, it's the first book in your Bible that's going to have red letters, red words in it, if you've got that kind of Bible. So this is in Matthew, chapter 21. And here's. It's a long one.

So. So try not to fall asleep in the middle of this, okay? So as they. And this is Jesus and his disciples as they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. This is a hill outside of Jerusalem.

Jesus sent two disciples ahead saying, go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there with her colt by her. So we got a donkey, and we got her little colt beside her. Untie them and bring them to me. And if anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them and he'll send them right away. And this took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet.

And here's what the prophecy said. Say to daughter Zion, see your king comes to you gentle and riding on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a donkey. So what did the disciples do? The disciples do what Jesus asked them. They went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

Them. And they brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. And a very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees. Remember those palm branches that you guys waved? Those are what they.

Those represent those branches that the crowd cut from the trees. And they spread them down on the road. And the crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, who? Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest heaven. Now, that's how Matthew describes it. Luke tells the story, and he's got basically the same story, but he says this. He includes this. They said, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. Now, we don't have parades like this. And in Bedford, if you've been to a parade here in Bedford, we have the marching band we have from the high school, and they play some songs. We have a million jeeps with lights on them at Christmas time. Those are really cool.

We have Santa Claus. And again we have the Grinches. I mentioned those. It's a fun parade. Sometimes in the summer when we do the limestone festival parade, we have like a fighter jet or something goes over.

That's always really cool to see. In military parades. There are soldiers on horses, there are tanks, there's planes that fly over. Sometimes they lay that red carpet, remember the red carpet for leaders to walk on. Maybe people in the crowd will chant, usa, usa.

Something like that. Military parades are meant to be really impressive. And when you watch it, you're supposed to feel like pride and how powerful your leader is and how powerful impressive your country is. But this parade was a little bit different. It was a parade you had for a king, but a completely different sort of king.

It was an upside down parade. Now, what do I mean by that? Well, instead of a powerful war horse that the leader sits on and makes you go, ooh, yeah. How powerful and how much authority the leader has. Look at that big horse he's on instead.

Jesus rides in on a donkey, a symbol of peace and humility. Years and years and years and years and years prior to this, there was another king who wrote a song. And in the song he writes this. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. Now, for us, it may mean this.

Some trust in tanks and some trust in artillery and some trust in stealth bombers, but we will trust in God. So that's one difference. The second difference is there's no red carpet. But there is a carpet. Did you notice that?

Instead of rolling out a red carpet carpet for the leader to roll right into town, the people lay down their coats and their palm branches to show this respect. And they shout, but instead of shouting USA Israel, they shout hosanna. Hosanna. What does hosanna mean? Does anyone know?

Hosanna means save us. Save us. You see, the people there wanted, and

this is what Alan mentioned earlier, the people there wanted a king to save them from the Romans who ruled their country. But Jesus had come to save them, but he was going to save them from something much bigger and much more destructive than the Romans. Jesus was there to save them from their sins.

Now, what is sin? It's a Jesus word. It's a Bible word, It's a religious word. But what does it mean? Sin is anything that we think, say or do that breaks God's rules in some way.

Anything we say, think or do that hurts others. In other words, it misses the mark that God has established that shows that we love him and that we love other people. It literally means missing the mark. Any cornholers here? Anyone like to play a good game?

It's all right. It's alright. There's nothing wrong with cornhole. It sounds, it's a horrible name, but it's a fun game. So if you've ever played cornhole, you know, you toss the beanbag and the goal is to get it through the little hole in the ramp.

Now if you get it into the hole, you've hit the mark. Yay. But if you don't get in the hole, it sort of lays there weirdly, sometimes half in, half out. Well, that missing the mark is a good picture of what the Bible describes as sin. Where we don't quite hit what God wants us to hit.

Where we do something, maybe take something that isn't yours, or hurt someone. Where we say something, maybe we call our brother or sister or our neighbor or our co worker or our spouse. A name that is hurtful. When we would show disrespect to the people that we should respect, which is everyone. Our teachers, our parents, our co workers.

Maybe when we think something, we think a bad thought about someone or something. Maybe I wish harm on someone. I want something bad to happen to someone. Maybe it's a selfish thought. Those are all sins.

Those all miss the mark of what God wants for us. Those all missed the mark of who God created us to be. God gave us these rules so that we could enjoy a good life, a happy life. They're all rules for our benefit. But when we miss the mark, when we sin, it creates a distance between ourselves and others.

We hurt people, we make life not happy and not good for others and ourselves. And more importantly, it creates this separation between us and God. It destroys that connection between us and our Creator. And it just creates a miserable sort of existence for us. We can look in the world and see how sin has made things really bad.

Now the Bible makes it clear that everyone sins, everyone thinks, says or does something to break God's rules or hurt others. So kids, it's

not just you. Your mom, your dad, your aunt, your uncle, your grandma, your grandpa, your teacher, your Sunday school teacher, me. We all, we all sin. We all miss the mark in some way at some time.

Now the people at this parade are seeing Jesus come down the road and they're waving their palm branches and they're throwing their coats on the ground and they're yelling Hosanna because they're asking Jesus to save them from the Romans. But. But he's not coming to save them from the Romans. He's coming to save them from something much worse, much, much more oppressive than the Romans. He's coming to save them from their sin.

And will he do it with armies and B2 bombers and stealth bombers and big horses? No, no, no. That's not how he's going to do it. Because this is not just an upside down parade. This is an upside down king.

This king is not one who demands everyone serve him. In fact, just the opposite. He says of himself. He describes himself this way in Matthew chapter 20. He says, the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

And that's how all those shouts of hosanna, hosanna, save us, save us. Will be answered. He will save us, but not with tanks, not with guns, not with soldiers, and not with big horses. He saves us by humbly giving his life for us. Philippians 2:8, describes it this way, describes Jesus like this, being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself.

He became obedient to death, even death on a cross. This parade kicks off a very important week for Christians, but a very challenging week for Jesus. Over the course of the next week, he will be betrayed by someone everyone thought was his friend. He will be abandoned by his disciples. He'll be killed by people who are jealous of him.

In fact, on Thursday night, right here in this room, we will gather here to remember that last supper that he had with his disciples before he dies on the cross. And Friday night, we're going to gather with people from all over our community, churches all over this community, to remember his death and his burial.

But all of this was part of God's plan. God makes it clear he loves us, so he gives us Jesus so that whoever puts their trust in him wouldn't perish, but would have eternal life. And eternal life is not just something out there far, far, far in the future. Eternal life can begin right now. We can experience the eternal life Jesus promised us.

How do we do that? One by saying, Jesus, I want to belong to you. I accept you as my Lord and Savior. And then once we do that, the eternal life begins operating as we stay close to him. And what does that look like?

That means that when we miss the mark, when we toss the bag and it doesn't hit the hole, we quickly say, oh, I missed the mark. I'm sorry, Jesus. I said did or thought something that did not please you and didn't help others. We confess our sins. We say, I'm sorry.

For the way I messed up. I'm sorry for the way I missed the mark. Please forgive what I said, what I did, or what I thought, and help me live closer to you. Help me trust in your power rather than me trying to make things happen on my own and in my own power. I want to trust in the Lord, Lord my God, not in horses or chariots.

Then just help me love others as you love me. Help me love my enemies. And Jesus says, if we can do this, if we can live this way, then we unlock in one sense the kingdom that he has for us, the eternal life that he wants us to live in. It's an upside down kingdom with an upside down king that calls for us to. To be upside down people.

So this week, as we prepare for Easter, I'm going to encourage us to be very intentional about living upside down. If you're offended, forgive quickly, quickly. Do not allow offenses to fester in your brain. When you catch it, sweep it out. If you offend, and we probably will at some point in time.

And if you know it, quickly ask for forgiveness, man. If you feel disrespected, if you feel hurt, if you feel like someone isn't treating you right, if you feel like you've got Romans or enemies on your back all the time, what do you do? You pray for them, Jesus says, and you find a way to bless them. That's really upside down stuff right there. But an upside down king asks us to do it.

The final thing is to be like Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve. And so look for an opportunity this week intentionally to serve others. And if you haven't yet trusted your life to Jesus, today is the day to do it. Let's pray. Jesus, we thank you for being our king, our upside down king, and calling us to this new place of humility and an eternal life.

You came to save us so that we could experience this, and so we. To not do so would be to. To betray you. In some sense, you love us and you want good life for us. So Jesus, help us to live upside down in this mixed up world.

Help us to follow you every day. Amen. Going to share in a time of communion. And as we do, this moment is an opportunity to think about the things maybe that need to turn upside down in your world, things that aren't aligned yet with Jesus, to say, lord, this is an area of my life where I'm missing the mark. I ask forgiveness for it and I ask you to help me do better this week.

Strengthen me, empower me by the Holy Spirit to live upside down in this mixed up world. Lord Jesus, meet us here in the bread and the cup. Thank you for loving us enough to die for us in Jesus name. Amen.

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