

## **Your King Comes To You.**

Text: Mat 21:1-9

1) Our Comfort

Suggested Hymns:

2) The Appeals

Tan: 11, 8, 377, 283, 7

Ade: 11, 1, 8, 377, 7

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Matthew 21:1-9, <sup>1</sup> *Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. <sup>3</sup> “And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.”*

<sup>4</sup> *All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: <sup>5</sup> “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.’” <sup>6</sup> So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them.*

<sup>8</sup> *And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ Hosanna in the highest!”* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

We live in a changing world. Ours is a generation of restlessness, confusion, and upheaval. We see it everywhere in the world, in the rise and fall of nations, and in the shifting opinions and ideals of people. We see it in the passing of customs and traditions. Many changes are often mistakenly called progress. In every field of human activity, social, scientific, political,

industrial, and commercial, there is an instability that sometimes leaves people without any hope of permanence and rest.

But there are some things that do stay the same. Deeply buried beneath the noisy tumult of the world lie the same fundamental needs of the human soul as always.

Man's basic problems are no different now than they have ever been. People still want peace, security, and love. Fundamentally there is no change in people from the day that Adam sinned. Neither is there any change in God. For every human question God has the final answer. For every human problem God has the perfect solution and for every human need God has a full supply.

There are some things that stay the same. That fact confronts us this morning with special emphasis. Today is New Year's Day in the Church of Jesus Christ. Today the hearts of Christians return to the beginning of God's story of salvation.

One by one again shall pass before the eyes of our faith the tremendous events that in their unfolding reveal to us the love of God and His marvellous plan to lead us to a glorious home.

On the Sundays and festivals of the church year that lie ahead we shall meditate on the eternal truths that stand unchanged and unchanging in a restless and transitory world. There is something deeply satisfying in this annual pilgrimage to the holy places of our Christian faith. This is what we need.

And so we welcome this first Sunday of a new church year with quiet joy and gladness. May the Spirit of God be with us as we listen to the words that sound the keynote for another season of God's eternal grace, "*Your King is coming to you.*" May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. Our Comfort**

Our comfort, firstly is the faithfulness of God. Halfway through the familiar record of the Gospel for today God gives us the divine understanding of this event. He says, '*All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.* Here is the first comforting thought of the message "*Your King is coming to you.*" Can you see the faithfulness of God?

Seven hundred years before, God had placed on the lips of His Prophet Isaiah a message of the coming of Christ. We read in Isaiah 62:11, "***Indeed the LORD has proclaimed To the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.'"***"

Two hundred years later, but still five hundred years before the event recorded in this Gospel, Zechariah had repeated this promise of God, adding several details as to the manner of His coming. There God gave a promise and in our text He fulfilled it.

This, then, is an example of the truthfulness of God, of the Scriptures, and of our holy Christian faith. And this fact has a deep and comforting significance for us.

In a day when people are ready to make many promises, only to consider them so often as mere tools to gain their selfish objectives, or to be kept or not only to suit themselves, we know that God is faithful, and that treachery and deceit are impossible with Him. Therefore we can confidently trust God for everything that He has promised.

Again in a time when the knowledge and wisdom that people have so painfully accumulated over many years is constantly being revised, when fact and fiction are often only a shade apart, when today we think we know and tomorrow we don't, there is this one thing of which we may be certain. It is that God's Word cannot and will not fail.

God's Word is eternal truth. Our faith can build and rest securely on this foundation. And in a time when the human soul has become a guinea-pig for the experiments of a thousand different religions, each offering some vague interpretation of spiritual things and some foggy hope of divine blessing, we know that in the religion of Jesus Christ we have the revelation of the mind of God. It is the one certain way to a blessed life in this world and in the next.

What a comfort all this is for us when faith would fail, what an encouragement in moments of doubt that come even to a Christian, to recognise once again the firm foundation on which we stand! As the Psalmist says in Psalm 33:4, ***For the word of the LORD is right, And all His work is done in truth.***

Our comfort, secondly is that we have a King in our need. Our text says *your King is coming to you*. There is comfort in these words for another reason. We have little understanding and appreciation of the importance of a king, but there have been times and circumstances when the message of our text meant a great deal in earthly things.

For an ancient nation to be without a king meant tragedy and disaster. We can see that in the condition of Israel at the time of our text. Its glory had departed, its power was broken, it had lost prestige among the nations, it was open to foreign invasion and oppression, its people lacked leadership, and its future was hopeless despite the intense longing of its patriots for a restoration of former power and glory.

Israel had no king, it was a lost nation. And just so we are by nature without a king in the spiritual sense of the word. Man is by nature lost, his glory departed, his spiritual power and strength broken. He is exposed to the tyranny and oppression of the devil. Without leadership, with an eternal future that is worse than hopeless.

It is true that there is in man a natural groping for the light and for the glory of God, but there is no hope of success. Without God mankind is a lost generation. But here is a message of comfort, *your King is coming to you*. Now we have hope, now we can take comfort, now we have someone to look to for defence, for power, for blessing, for protection, for deliverance, and for glory.

Our comfort, thirdly is that we have a King of grace and glory. And what a King! St. Matthew refers to Zechariah's prophecy, but he does not quote it word for word. Zechariah gives us additional qualities that should again bring comfort and hope to our hearts.

The prophecy tells us four things about this King. He is just; He has salvation; He is lowly; and He is meek.

Firstly, in Him is perfect righteousness and sinlessness, to cover all our sins, to grant us peace and pardon, and to make us holy and acceptable before God.

Secondly, in Him is complete salvation, a perfect redemption prepared by God for His people.

Finally, this King is not unapproachable and inaccessible, because in all lowliness and meekness He comes to us. Here, therefore, we see our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the fullness of His glory, in His majesty and exaltation as a righteous King and Deliverer, as well as in His lowliness as our humble Brother. It is to Christ to whom we lift our eyes at the beginning of a new church year.

And here again is divine comfort for us. We are not left desolate and forsaken, we are not abandoned by God to the cruelty and tyranny of our enemies and the bitter fate of eternal damnation, but we have a King, a glorious and magnificent King and Saviour. With full confidence and perfect trust let us look to Him in faith for all our needs. In His service we should be supremely happy and contented.

## 2. The Appeals

Firstly, there is an appeal for faith. *Your King is coming to you.* That glad announcement is an appeal to us for faith and service. Christ is no longer visibly present among us. His coming is no longer in a material and physical way as at Jerusalem.

Today He uses the vehicles of His Word and the Sacraments. It is true that also today as there at Jerusalem, there may seem to be a lack of majesty and power in His coming. The Gospel remains an object of widespread human ridicule, and the Sacraments are often despised and neglected. But that should not cause us concern.

We should not let ourselves be misled by humble appearances. Christ still comes in all His divine power. His Word is still to draw us to faith. His Sacraments are still to command our believing reverence.

In Christ, as He comes to us in the means of grace today, we are still to see the *“Son of David,”* prophesied by God as the world’s only Saviour and Redeemer. He is still the one who *“comes in the name of the Lord,”* in whom is revealed all the wisdom, love, and mercy of God.

It is Christ whom we should welcome by faith. Our faith should be a constant and persevering faith, not subject to the influence of popularity and human opinion, not like the faith of those multitudes at Jerusalem who glorified Christ on Sunday and crucified Him on Friday. Our faith should be like that of

the disciples, who were with Christ at the beginning and who to the end of their lives found in Him their only hope and salvation.

In Christ alone we also can find hope and blessing. Recognising our desperate need, humbling ourselves before Him in penitence over our unworthiness and sinfulness, casting aside everything else, let us always look to Christ alone for peace and pardon. That is one appeal implied in the announcement of this Gospel, “*Your King is coming to you.*”

Secondly, after the appeal for faith there follows another, an appeal for worship. It is indicated in the name that is given Him, “*Your King.*” And there are several directions that our worship to this King should take. St. Matthew tells us of multitudes that gathered together and paid homage to Christ and sang His praises.

That speaks to us today of our gathering together for our church services, where we also worship Him and sing to Him our hymns of praise and adoration. That is surely a fitting appeal at the beginning of a new church year. Sunday after Sunday our God and Saviour wants us gather together about Him, to hear His Word, to enjoy His blessed presence, and to bring to Him our reverent worship. Our King expects it of us. Let us gladly respond by faithful church attendance in the coming year.

Thirdly, there is an appeal for offerings. In our text we are told of offerings that were placed into the service of Christ there at Jerusalem. There were the animals that the man of Bethphage placed at His disposal, the garments spread on the road to honour His coming, and the palm branches offered to Him as a tribute to His majesty.

These things represented what the people had. They were willingly given, without command and urging. So today we also should bring our offerings, a portion of our material possessions, the things that we have, our silver and our gold, to lay them at His feet in token of our humble reverence and love for Him. And may our offerings be as freely given, as spontaneously brought, as were the gifts of the people on that day. “*The Lord has need of them*” no less today than there at Jerusalem.

Finally, there is an appeal for service. We can see, in the conduct of the disciples of our Lord in this Gospel, a fine example of service by deeds and

works. Jesus gave them instructions, placing them under command to carry out His will, when He sent two of them ahead into the village. And we are told, ***“So the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them.”***

This is so often the succession of events in the record of the Bible. God gives orders, and His people obey; the Lord commands, and His followers listen. May we also bring to our King such obedient service.

Too often there is in our heart an unwillingness to serve Him. Perhaps our old Adam does not agree with what our Lord requires in the Scriptures, or perhaps the service we are asked to give seems burdensome to us, or perhaps we can think of other objections. But that should make no difference.

No doubt those two disciples also had objections to the rather strange command of the Lord on that day, but they ***“went and did as Jesus commanded them.”*** Let this be said also of us, that as we welcome our King, as we worship Him, as we expect of Him the greatest gifts of time and eternity, so we will also bring Him our willing service and our loyal obedience all the days of our life.

***Your King is coming to you.*** With this message we enter a new church year. Not so far away lies Christmas, when in a special sense that King comes to us. ***Your King is coming to you.*** This is a personal message. To you and to me it offers divine comfort and supreme hope.

God grant that you and I may follow the appeal to serve Him in the blessedness of our Christian faith. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.