

**Rejoice greatly, Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!**  
**Look! Your King is coming to you. He is righteous and brings salvation.**  
**He is humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**  
**I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem.**  
**The battle bow will be taken away, and he will proclaim peace to the nations.**  
**His kingdom will extend from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth.**

Rejoice Greatly and Shout! Your King Has Come

Rejoice greatly. Shout. This was not a request from God for the inhabitants of Zion and Jerusalem. It was a command. When Jesus came into town on Palm Sunday, the people naturally rejoiced. They didn't have to be commanded to do so, because Jesus had healed their sick and raised their dead. He had preached with authority and grace. They expected great things out of Jesus, that He would be their Messiah. The children were singing "**Hosanna to the Son of David.**" The people took off their outer clothes and threw them on the road. They cut off palm branches and laid them out as well, as a makeshift carpeting for Jesus to walk on. There was genuine excitement. This is exactly what God commanded to be done at the coming of Christ, and even hundreds of years before. He wanted the people to shout and rejoice at the promise that the King was coming.

In the past we have reenacted the Palm Sunday processional. We have had the people wave their palm branches and sing a little bit as they walk around the church. But it doesn't come near to the excitement they felt on the original day. It's not only with this, but with any worship service. Heaven knows we don't sing like we could or we should. If the music isn't quite like we want it and we are a little bit tired, forget about it.

Why should we? Because, as Zechariah said, "**Look! Your king comes to you, righteous and saving.**" Maybe half the problem is that we don't want a king to rule over us. That's too strong - too macho - too dictatorial. I can call Him my friend. I can call Him my advisor. I don't mind if He can give me some advice on how to budget my finances or a little bit of help in my relationships. Maybe He could heal a sickness now and then, that would be good. I like the idea of calling Him the "glue" that can hold my relationship with my spouse together. That's good. But I'm not so sure about this King stuff. I don't need anyone telling me what to do. I can figure it out on my own.

Is this the kind of King Jesus came to be? That's not what Zechariah talks about. He says **Look! Your king comes to you, righteous and saving.** Our sinful nature says, "Yeah, I know. He died for my sins. Tell me something I don't know. Tell me something that I can use in my day to day living." Then God's nostrils start to flare. There's a good reason why.

Think about it this way. You've heard the warning about how evil ISIS is right? Have you actually taken the time to see the video of them beheading the Christians on the beach front or burning the men alive in the cage? You see the people diving out of the windows of the World Trade Center. You see people dancing in the streets and rejoicing over it. Then you see in plain sight what wickedness is. If you focus on the wickedness that has been done in the name of Allah, it will make you angry. If you hear people saying, "We just need to

understand them. We need to be nicer to them, and they will be nicer to us,” it will make you all the more angry I would imagine. When you take a good look at their atrocities, you will hate what they’ve done. You will want their wickedness to stop and you would especially rejoice at their destruction if they killed one of your own family members, would you not?

Now think about the things you have done to hurt people and hurt yourself. Think about the thoughts you have had, the words you have spoken that harmed others. There is an enemy within you that needs to be beaten down and punished for what you’ve done. There is a part of you that you hate. He or she needs to be conquered.

Have you seen how wicked the devil is in the Bible? He possessed children and threw them into fires. He infiltrated the prophets of the Old Testament and spread lies so that the armies would go into war and be defeated. He had Job’s children put to death and put boils on his skin. He purposely examines your weaknesses and invisibly does all he can to get you to fall into sin so that your family will be destroyed and you will be in hell. When you see your children get addicted to drugs or you witness a family being broken apart, don’t you think the devil has been involved in some way? This isn’t the worst of it. He wants nothing more than to see people end up in hell. He is pure evil. We should hate him and everything about him. He is the enemy.

Think also about death. For those of you who have seen your mom or your grandmother breathe their last, you know how painful that is to watch. You’ve seen what happens when cancer gets a hold of someone. You’ve experienced death. We as Christians take great comfort in the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection from the dead. We are comforted when a loved one stops suffering. We know the comfort God offers of eternal life. But that doesn’t lessen the fact that suffering and death are still awful things. It is a result of sin in the world, and we should hate death. No matter how much people like to celebrate the life that was, don’t lose sight of how awful death is. Take a good look at it.

How do you respond to Jesus’ death ride into Jerusalem? When Saul was anointed as king the Bible says, **“some troublemakers said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts.”** They refused to give him gifts because they weren’t very impressed with him for whatever reason. It was a sign of disrespect. That is how many of us treat Jesus. What is it but disrespect for you to say nothing and sing nothing to the God who has saved you from hell? What kind of hope would you have at death were it not for Jesus’ journey to the cross? A failure to rejoice, a refusal to rejoice, this is sin. It is a damnable sin to sing nothing and say nothing in praise of the King who came to rescue you.

Perhaps a part of the reason we have a hard time praising Jesus is because of the way in which He saves. He doesn’t ride in on the war horse that is renowned for its beauty and bravery. He comes in on the donkey, the beast that is renowned for its stubbornness and big ears. He didn’t come riding into Jerusalem and brag about how He was going to defeat Satan and unseat the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law by beating the tar out of them. He doesn’t really say anything when He comes into Jerusalem. The children do all the talking through their singing. **“Hosanna to the Son of David.”**

And then what happens to Him? He gets accused of rebellion. He says nothing. He does nothing to fight back, and He gets crucified in the process. So what would we say? Jesus came to be a pacifist? Perhaps, in some

ways. Pacifism is irritating in some senses. Most of us don't like pacifists. We don't like it because they don't seem to care about whether laws are broken or not. They care more about the people that are breaking the laws than they do about the victims of their lawbreaking. They cry for mercy while they themselves don't have to feel the effects of their pacifism. They talk about love and acceptance when they don't have to suffer as a result of it. They don't realize how much harm is done when laws are not kept and tolerance rules.

Jesus didn't come to be this kind of a pacifist. He came to allow the law to be kept. He came to be a pacifist so that the law could be kept - on Him. He wasn't calling for toleration. He was endorsing damnation - that would fall on Him instead of us. If anyone felt the results of breaking the Law - it was Him. Don't think that His pacifism was done out of a hatred of justice. It was done out of love for justice.

Jesus knew that by allowing the wrath of God to come on Him on that cross that the Law would be kept and God's wrath would be fulfilled. In the midst of all of their anger, Jesus hung there relaxed, because He knew what His death was accomplishing. He knew what would happen in the end. Jesus entered Jerusalem in faith that the Father would accept His sacrifice and raise Him from the dead. He trusted that through His sacrifice the sins of the world would be paid for and God's wrath would be satisfied. Death would be conquered. The devil would not be able to accuse us. Jesus would rise from the dead as the exalted King. God would win. All of the weapons of war would be rendered useless. We could have peace. **He will proclaim peace to the nations. His kingdom will extend from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth.**

Angry people are those who think that they need to be in charge, in a sense. There's always something to be angry about - maybe a politician - a boss - a spouse - a child. Job was angry as his children were put to death and he had boils put on him. He was angry that there was nothing he could do about it, and God didn't seem to be answering his prayers. Murderers were getting away with murder, and here he was, a faithful follower of the LORD, suffering for nothing. God answered him by more or less saying, "Ok, you want to play God? Let's see how many people you can bring to justice if you're so powerful." This was probably even more frustrating to Job, but God was right.

In Paul's epistle to the Ephesians he talks about this wonderful humility that Jesus went through. He then points the finger at us and says, "That should be your attitude too!" If God, through the worst kind of seeming injustice, could work out the salvation of the world, then couldn't He work some mighty things for you as well when you go through suffering and death? Instead of getting all angry and ticked off at God and the world, just humble yourself and ask God for strength. If God promises you salvation through faith in Christ and you end up in heaven, and if God promises you that He is in charge, then what are you getting so angry about? Have you prayed about it? Anger over persecution or injustice melts away when you know God will work it out for your good.

Paul was persecuted badly by a man named "Alexander the metalworker." That title in itself is kind of scary. Here's a guy who would heat iron and smash it into shape. Imagine what he used some of those instruments for on Paul! But what did Paul say in 2 Timothy 4:14-15?

**Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. <sup>15</sup> You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.**

He said, "Be on your guard." But notice also the calm way he said, "The Lord will repay him." More or less he was saying, "I'll let God take care of it."

Do you have that kind of peace in yourself? Or are you constantly irritated and agitated? Are you upset over your health problems? Are you worked up and screaming at the failure of your spouse, your child, your parent, or your co-worker? If Jesus could face people's false accusations and allow soldiers to spit in his face and whack him on the head and taunt him - don't you think you could put up with a lot more than what you do?

When you find yourself full of anger and not wanting to rejoice, go back to Jesus. He had plenty of reasons to be angry at the world. He has plenty of reasons to be angry with you. Yet He decided to take His anger out on Himself and die for the world. He decided to pay for your sins. He decided to shut the devil up. He decided to conquer death. Take a good look at your Messiah, and then you will find a great reason to rejoice.

Rejoice greatly! Shout! The people rejoiced the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Yet a mere five days later they cried out for Pontius Pilate to crucify Him. It makes you wonder what they were really so excited about. Some of them probably wanted Jesus to overthrow the Roman government. Some of them were maybe just excited because Jesus healed one of their loved ones. They got caught up in the moment.

Rejoicing on this Palm Sunday is not just a matter of waving a few Palm Branches or getting revved up by singing a tune you like. Look at what Jesus came into Jerusalem to do. He came to give the devil nothing to accuse us of on Judgment Day. He came to conquer death. I don't have to try and make everything in the world right. I don't have to try to punish myself or try and conquer myself or those around me. I can trust that Jesus already won the battle when He rode into Jerusalem to die. Jesus came to be your conquering King on this Holy Week. He came to put your enemies to death. For that, you can rejoice. Amen.