

**Text:** Philippians 2:5-11 (Lent 6 [Palm Sunday], Series A, April 9, 2017)

**Theme:** There's our Jesus!

**Virtue** (basic truth): On Palm Sunday, the Name above every name rides into Jerusalem to die.

**Malady** (our problem): We tend to lose Jesus in the Palm Sunday pomp and forget who is there.

**Telic Note** (goal): By means of this sermon, the Spirit of Grace cascades our hearts with the grace of Jesus to direct our focus, our faith, and our praise to the Savior and Lord.

**Propositional Statement** (aim): Such a wonderful, familiar picture! But are we in danger of over-familiarity with it that we forget the One for whom the palms were raised? Maybe. Today, though, we celebrate the celebration and know with joy, *there's our Jesus!*

**Specific Law in Text:** "your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5 – law as a guide for our daily lives as Christians; what's that lead us to think, say, and do?)

**Specific Gospel in Text:** "gave him the name that is above every name . . . Jesus" (Phil. 2:9, 10)

**Doctrinal Thought:** Jesus' state of humiliation is the time when, as the God-Man, he had but did not make full use of his divine attributes; his state of exaltation is the time when, as the God-Man, he has and again makes full use of his divine attributes.

**Sanctification Thought:** *"Gracious Savior, in perfect obedience to the Father's will and in perfect love for rebellious sinners, you ride into Jerusalem to die. Friend, thank you! As I continue to celebrate Palm Sunday, do remain the focus and foundation of my faith; let me rejoice in your perfect obedience, and live obedient to you; let me marvel at your attitude, and display the same patience and love; let me ponder your victory, and crave the final victory you have secured for me. In your name I pray. Hosanna and amen!"*

### *Philippians 2:5-11*

<sup>5</sup> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus

<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Friends, Paul said it with glad assurance to individuals who needed to hear it; I'll assure you, too: *"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Phil. 1:2). Amen!

Maybe we know the account just a little too well. And maybe this whole Palm Sunday celebration is a bit too familiar. Don't get me wrong, not at all correlating over-awareness of it as awful or evil; but maybe we miss something in over-familiarity with the events of Palm Sunday.

Take ten seconds; summarize it in your mind (Zechariah prophesied and Jesus fulfilled. King rides a colt as palms and psalms raise praise). Visual is vivid; story is simple; account, apparent. Heard it before, read it before, and, likely we've even colored Jesus sitting side-saddle on a lowly colt dozens of times before.

How many times did you note Jesus in your summary?

So I'll say it again, maybe we know the account just a little too well; and maybe this whole Palm Sunday celebration is just a bit too familiar. The pious side of us would never admit that, but I question it because I wonder how often we forget to see our Jesus on Palm Sunday. Sure, we know it's about him – entire Bible is – but next Sunday's is key, so let's breeze through *Ride On, Ride On In Majesty* and call today good. Be careful; that mentality is too familiar with Palm Sunday! Or, our excited hearts get absorbed in the festivities, that we forget the One on whom it centers and to whom the crowd cries. Be careful! That's over-familiarity with it!

Don't want that to be the case . . . ever. Because if we lose Jesus in the Palm Sunday pomp or let him fade into background of the crying crowd, or even exalt the foal upon which he rode, we lose why this day is so special and forget why this celebration of him is so worthy. So whether we've read it a thousand times or this our first glance at the Palm Sunday pomp, let's consider the One whom it celebrates and learn to say and see with confident assurance, *there's our Jesus!*

That said, because the accounts are so crisp, I'm content to let the Old Testament lesson from Zechariah and the Gospel account from Matthew stand summary. Keep them in mind as this sermon progresses; if you need to, glance back at those words to keep the visual vivid and the hosanna echoed. But, today, it's the Spirit Inspired from Philippians 2 that cascades our hearts to help us understand why today is such a blessed importance and such an important blessing.

First half of our lesson: *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross"* (Philippians 2:5-9).

Not only do those stanzas of an apparent early, Christian, creedal hymn fit nicely into the historical accounts of the Gospels, but they magnify the heart and work of Jesus. He's God in every essence! But he didn't retain by force (grasp) the power, pomp, and prestige the Son of God rightly deserves. He set that aside to serve. Nor did he "*set up an earthly throne or glorify himself during his ministry*" (Wendland, 157). Instead, with no place to lay his head (Lk. 9:58) he lived every day to glorify his Father. He held divine authority and divine actions; yet set their full use aside – emptied himself, humbled himself – and took his every thought, word, and action captive to the Father's direction. God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God . . . who divested himself of all that glory, and who did so for the sake of "not him."

That's so contrary to sinful thought. Our world and world of thought is dominated by "*me, myself, and I,*" the Eternal Son of Heaven was driven by love for "*you, yourself, and you!*" In our hearts, we are first and foremost; but in the heart of God himself, we are first and foremost! We rebel; he remains obedient. We sin; he stays sinless. We deserve death; he endures it for us!

That's still the One around whom Palm Sunday centers. ***There's our Jesus*** . . . who rides to die because you haven't taken every thought, word, and action captive to the Father's direction. ***There's our Jesus*** . . . whose obedience brings his death because of your disobedience. ***There's our Jesus*** . . . who fulfills God's Word and follows God's will because you've set both aside. ***There's our Jesus*** . . . the God-Man who, in love for a wayward world, goes to die. Forget the palms, crowds, and foal; look at the scene and see the Sinless! ***There's our Jesus*** . . . who actively and passively and willingly and wanting-ly and obediently and humbly and meekly endures the hell of God's wrath . . . for you. That's the plan from eternity, put into effect in time (Christmas) and in full focus here and now on Palm Sunday. Super simply, ***there's our Jesus!***

Got to make sure see that and we don't forget that. Festive as today is, the palms were raised and cloaks were laid for the Son of David who came to die, the King who came to subject himself.

As in-focus as that is today, Palm Sunday's about victory, not defeat, and salvation not mourning. Sad and strange as that work-week ends, this is the glorious outcome: "*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,*<sup>10</sup> *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*<sup>11</sup> *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (Phil. 2:9-11).

***There's our Jesus*** . . . adored by the crowds and exalted by the Father. ***There's our Jesus*** . . . who rides to die; but who rides to defeat Satan and defy death. ***There's our Jesus*** . . . who rides to be ridiculed; but who rides to rule. ***There's our Jesus*** . . . who enters Jerusalem as the Lord of all to die for all. ***There's our Jesus*** . . . who lets go of his glory to the Father's glory and to bring you to eternal glory. ***There's our Jesus*** . . . whom, even before a bleak Friday, we get to see!

***There's our Jesus . . .*** the Name above every name – before whom and in whom every knee in heaven, on earth, and under the earth will bow in respect at his return; the Name given the One God promised to send, promised to save; the only Name worthy of worship. ***There's our Jesus!***

Jesus. Remember what that name means? Jesus/Joshua: *salvation is of the LORD*.

Friends, let's make sure we're clear: who do we get to see ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday? Very simply, very clearly, very vividly . . . we get to see our . . . Savior! Let's not lose him in the crowd or let him fade behind the palms of the picture. Let's not conscript him to a coloring activity or forget him as we go about our day. Let's not celebrate what he divested and leave it here when we go about more important things – like our tax deductions. And don't for a second think he's a mere religious guru, a poor sap who died for a cause he really believed in.

Picture Palm Sunday and ***there's your Jesus!*** Said even better: friends, there's your Savior!

See him; then appreciate why the Holy Spirit wants the Philippian Christian and Boulder-County Christians and all Christians to behold him. Because for some the day was great . . . but for others, it was awful; so in focus is the One who gave both and whose grace was enough for both. Because for some, guilt was heavy and for others the temptation was intense; so in focus is the One who freely forgives and strengthens us to stand in his love. Because for some persecution was intense and for others the meaning of life unclear; so in focus is the Palm Sunday King who died that we might live and lives that we no more may die – how's that for life-meaning?! Because for some earth was a desert drear; so in focus is the King who crowns us with heaven.

That's why Paul directs attention and focuses faith to the One who humbled himself and was exalted by the Father. And that's why Paul encourages, “*let your attitude be the same as that of Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 2:5). That's why we live to serve him in glad and willing service and take our every thought, word, and action captive to the Father's Word and Will. That's why we cry for his deliverance and thank him for it with a life that celebrate and shares him. That's why we bring him our hosannas, follow him, see him, acknowledge him, adore him until we see him!

Know I started this sermon on the thought that we know this celebration too well. I'm not ready to recant that, but do me a favor: look at front cover of your service booklet. I know you know it, but I'll ask you not to toss the bulletin when you leave – keep it in front of you this week; tape it to your finger-printed fridge; put it on your dusty dashboard; mask it to your mirror . . . look at it. Who do you see? When life is hard or the experience is pleasant, whether day is routine or rough, whether cry is festive or frustrated, look at it; say, see, and smile . . . ***there's our Jesus!***

Hosanna to him! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! Amen!