

PALM SUNDAY 2020  
TEXT: JOHN 12: 12-19  
THEME: KING JESUS

**12** The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. **13** So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" **14** And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, **15** "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" **16** His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.

In the name of Jesus:

The Coronavirus has affected young and old, rich and poor, this virus has even affected royalty. The Prince of Wales has been diagnosed with the virus as has other world leaders. When world leaders are at risk, contingency plans are made to make certain that if something happens to a king or queen, life will go on.

Some time ago the United Kingdom made contingency plans for when Queen Elizabeth dies. One of the most famous bridges in the world is London Bridge. You may recall the famous nursery rhyme: London Bridge is falling down. The falling of London Bridge has taken on new meaning today. London Bridge has fallen is actually a code with significant meaning for not only Londoners, but people around the world. London Bridge is down is the code that will be used by the

British government when the Queen passes away.

The death of the Queen is inevitable. According to an article in the British Newspaper, *The Guardian*, plans have been made when, not if but when, the Queen dies. Her death will be a significant event. She has outlived Presidents and other heads of state. The Queen is a respected head of state. For a vast majority of British citizens, she is the only monarch they have ever known. Sadly, the Queen will die as will every human being. But once she does die, then the code word London Bridge is down will be sent out, and once sent out, a series of events will take place.

These series of events are all well scripted, to how her death will be announced to the world and how the news will be announced to those in the kingdom. Obituaries have already been written, news scripts carefully crafted, even the entry music announcing the death on radio has been chosen. For, you see, its rare these days when a monarch dies, and just as rare when a new monarch takes its place.

Every thing, I mean everything has already been rehearsed. The main reason for rehearsals is to have words that are roughly approximate to the moment. One monarch has died and another one will assume the throne. The royal standard will appear on the screen.

The national anthem will play. You will remember where you were.

And then? A new king will be crowned. And this too will be scripted. The day after, called D+1 the flags will go back up, and at 11am, the successor will be proclaimed king. The Accession Council, will meet. The clerk will read out the formal wording, "Whereas it has pleased Almighty God to call to His Mercy our late Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth the Second of Blessed and Glorious memory..." and the new monarch will carry out the first official duties of his reign, swearing to protect the Church in Scotland, and speaking of the heavy burden that is now his. He will tour the country, and his reign will begin. No one knows what this kingdom will be like, or how it will end. But there will be some constants, as some things in the UK will not change. In spite of a new king, there will still be problems and issues to be addressed and solved. Live will get back to normal. And people will live their lives with questions that still need to be answered. Questions as to the meaning of life, of eternity, of death itself. No matter the monarch, sin will rear its ugly head. Consciences will be afflicted with guilt, memories seared with shame. Death will still affect everyone. And no king can change any of this, except One. King Jesus.

On that first Palm Sunday Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem,

on the back of a donkey. John writes about this in his Gospel: “**12** The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. **13** So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” **14** And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, **15** “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.”

After these events, John writes that: “His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.” You see, Jesus’ triumphal ride into Jerusalem was not well scripted, instead it was predicted, prophesized in the Old Testament. The people of Jerusalem knew exactly what was happening when Jesus rode that donkey into Jerusalem. They had seen this somewhere before.

Something similar took place almost 1000 years earlier. King David was getting ready to die. He wanted Solomon to be his successor. But how would David make known to all that Solomon was to be king? The writer of 1 Kings tells us: “**32** King David said, “Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.” So they

came before the king. **33** And the king said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. **34** And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel. Then blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ **35** You shall then come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, for he shall be king in my place. And I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.” And that is what took place.” (I Kings 1: 32-40). The Bible says that there was a noise that reverberated throughout the country. And there was a new King.

The earth reverberated with noise when Jesus entered Jerusalem. Children sang Hosanna to the Son of David, people cut palm branches and lined His path with the cloaks they were wearing. The whole city was stirred up! Who is this King, Jesus? And what type of Kingdom is He a King of?

He is a King like no other. Not like the kings in your life. What, you say, you don’t have a king? Well, consider for a moment those times in your life when you think that the world revolves around you. When life is about your issues, your problems, your job, your needs. Your life is all about your self. You and I live in a world with gods of our

own making, we make our own kings to follow. We live, move, and have our being in a culture all about me. There is an unrestrained pursuit of what makes us happy, or should I say, what you think what would make you happy. If only my kids would listen....if only I had more money...if only my spouse would be a better spouse...our lives are filled with if onlys, if only I had this my life would be better. Life has become all about the self. We have made ourselves kings and queens and are tempted to live in our own little kingdom, seeking to have our own needs met. We live our lives as if we mattered the most and that God, the one True God, mattered the least. It is no wonder that lives today are filled with anxiety, depression, and substance abuse!

Doesn't God say have no other gods? Aren't you supposed to fear, love and trust in Him above all things? The Bible says that in Him, in God we live, move, and have our being, and yet, each of us have created our own little kingdom of having the world revolve around me.

As we are living in the middle of a Pandemic of global proportions, just think about all of the things, the idols, that people have set up to worship that have taken the place of God. People's lives have revolved around sports, money, their health, their retirement, and their own seeking of pleasure. One by one, during this Pandemic, we have seen

the idols and false gods that we have based our lives on all come falling down, just like that London Bridge nursery rhyme. Are we learning our lesson? Have we learned our lesson?

The season of Lent is a time of self-denial, a time when we seek to take the focus off our self, our own little kingdom, and focus on a new King, a different, King. What God calls each of us to do is to repent! To turn from ourselves and focus on Him, to direct our eyes away from ourselves and to see Someone who is truly beautiful, Someone who is truly a King: King Jesus.

God sent Jesus, His only Son, to usher in God's Kingdom. But Jesus doesn't look like a king. And yet, like Solomon He rides on the back of a donkey into Jerusalem because Jesus precisely is the King that you need. He rides into Jerusalem, not to be worshipped, but to die. Jesus Himself said that the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. There is only one King who loves you so much that He willing dies the damnable death in your place. He is the chosen One of God, the Messiah, the Lamb of God who takes away your sin, He is your King, King Jesus.

So look at your King as Pilate says to crowd: "Behold your king!" The crowd cries out: "We have no King but Caesar!" Today many cry out

that no one is going to tell us what to do, we are kings and queens of our own making! This King, King Jesus, is unlike any other king. He rules in love, giving Himself as a ransom for many. At His crucifixion people recoiled at the thought of Jesus being a King. There was a sign over nailed to the cross proclaiming Jesus, King of the Jews. "Take down that sign, "the people cried out, "He is not our King!" But Pilate remained steadfast: What I have written, I have written."

God is even more steadfast than Pilate. For God has said:" My word shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." God has loved you with an everlasting love, so much so that He sent you King Jesus. What He has recorded about King Jesus was true then, is true now, and will be forever. And what does God say? "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Gospel." For "the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." "For He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

In Baptism you have been made a child of the Father, a citizen of the Kingdom of God, not by works, but by faith. "Your citizenship is in

heaven, and from it you await your King and Savior, Jesus Christ.” So how then should you live your life in honor of King Jesus?

“**5** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **9** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Amen