

SERMON FOR OCTOBER 4, 2020

TEXT: ZECHARIAH 9:9-10

TITLE: EXPECTATIONS MEET REALITY

Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion, shout aloud daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation. Humble and riding on a donkey! I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

In the name of Jesus:

Expectations meet reality. The sandwich looked good on the menu but it didn't look so good when it was served. You thought you had taken a great picture, but now as you look at it, you wish you had taken it again. You thought you would get everything in the trunk when you packed for vacation, but when it came to pack the trunk, you had way too much stuff. Expectations meet reality.

In our text for today it is all about great expectations meeting bitter realities. Our text is the traditional reading for Palm Sunday. You know all about Jesus' parade into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. But the Palm Sunday parade into Jerusalem by Jesus wasn't the only parade that year. Roman historians tell us that Pontius Pilate, the Governor of Judea, regularly held military parades, with all of the trappings. Roman cavalry and soldiers, some

on horseback, others marching, were the norm. Leading the parade was Pilate himself on horseback. Each soldier would be decked out in leather armor. Sword and spears at their side. Their golden helmets would gleam in the sunlight. Drummers would bang out the beat of the march. The message was clear, Roman military might and muscle would bring about and keep the peace. They called it Pax Romana, Roman peace, peace through the strength of Rome.

It is Palm Sunday, and the followers of Jesus expected Jesus to defeat Pilate and the Romans. That is why the crowd cried out: “Hosanna to the Son of David.” The word Hosanna is a Hebrew word meaning: Save us now. Hosanna was a cry for Jesus to save the Jewish nation from Roman rule and occupation. The crowd expected Jesus to be a great warrior who was going to defeat the enemy, like David did with Goliath. That was their expectation.

But here is the reality: “Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion, shout aloud daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation. Humble and riding on a donkey!” (Zechariah 9:9). Just note what Zechariah is saying here in this verse.

Behold your King!. Behold means to look and see. Take notice, here is your King. Behold means for you to take a look, this is the whole point of what

I am trying to say to you. The word king means authority, power and might.

This isn't any king, this is your King, so rejoice, shout aloud! Why?

Your King is coming to you. Your king is for you, the person, the individual, You are more than a name and a number. You are more than a driver's license or a social security card. You are more than a cog in a machine, destined to be someone who is forgotten about. This king is coming for you because he knows you. He loves you.

This King is righteous and having salvation. During the history of Israel, the kings of Israel were mostly unbelievers, pagans, they were called to an account by the prophets. This King is not an unbeliever, He is One who knows God. He is one who has salvation. He possesses salvation. When you have something you either keep it or give it away. This King doesn't keep salvation, He gives it away. Freely. Without cost to you or anyone else. He gives it away freely, generously, repeatedly, forever.

This Salvation and this King has a name: Jesus. He is the One who saves. It is the name the angel gave to Mary to name Him when He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Salvation has a name, Jesus. And salvation has a place: Golgotha. It has a day: Good Friday. It has a time: 9 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon on Good Friday. Salvation has a cost: the blood of God's one

and only Son. Salvation has a crown of thorns, nails and a spear, this is your King, King Jesus, righteous and having salvation, giving it away freely for you.

Your King comes, riding on a donkey. In the ancient Near East, a donkey was like my first car, an old, 1964 Ford Falcon Convertible. The name may sound nice and impressive but when my dad gave it to me as my first car in 1972, it was a real clunker. A wreck on wheels. That is what the donkey symbolized. No horses or chariots for Jesus, no army, no chariots, no horses or helmets either.

Jesus comes as a different kind of King. He comes bringing a different kind of peace, a peace not as the world can give. He comes to bring peace with God. He comes so that we can have peace with God, experience the peace of God that surpasses all human understanding. God's peace calms our fears, settles our hearts, and lowers our anxieties. How does God do it? Zechariah says in chapter 11 (verse 12) that the King will be sold for 30 pieces of silver. In Chapter 12 he says that the King will be pierced with a spear. And in Chapter 13 he says that the King will be struck and the sheep will be scattered. The expectations of defeating Rome are met with the cruel reality of Jesus dying on a cross.

When Jesus was crucified on the cross, Pilate placed a sign about Him, much to the consternation of the Jews. The sign said: "This is Jesus, King of

the Jews.” The people weren’t expecting this kind of King. They were looking for one who would crush Rome, and in doing so they missed the One who would crush sin, Satan and death. And in doing so He would bring us lasting peace. To prove it, God turned the darkness of Good Friday into the glorious light of Easter! And Zechariah foretold it when he wrote in chapter 9: “And I will cut off chariots from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the bow of warfare will be cut off. And I will speak peace to the nations. And His rule will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”

We need this peace more than ever. And the world needs it too. Because life these days has us feeling pulled apart at the seams. Fear reigns and anxiety rules. Sin is ever present and death is knocking at the door for all of us. We would all relish a life of just getting back to what was once normal. It would be great to have a life just close to normal.

And so Jesus speaks, to you and to me. He speaks His word of peace. He says: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you.” “I have said these things to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have trials and tribulations, but be of good cheer, I, Jesus, have overcome the world.” For you. This is what Jesus does for you. This is what Jesus gives to you.

Jesus isn’t the type of Savior or King who will wave a magic wand and tell you that by believing in Him all of your dreams will come true. The reality

of King Jesus is this: He loves you with an everlasting love. He suffers, bleeds, and dies for you. He is here for you, an ever present Help in times of trouble. So trust in Him. Believe in Him. Love Him. Live for Him. For your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation, riding on a donkey, to give you His perfect peace.

Amen