

SERMON FOR NOVEMBER 28, 2021

TEXT: LUKE 19: 28-40

THEME: THE NEED FOR CHRISTMAS

28 And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. 33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 And they said, "The Lord has need of it." 35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. 37 As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

In the name of Jesus:

The signs of the season are all around us. Lancaster's Christmas Parade took place two Saturdays ago. Christmas lights are beginning to adorn homes and businesses. People are putting up their Christmas trees, in fact, we do so as a church family later today at 4 pm. There is a familiar hustle and bustle of the season that we missed last year because of Covid, now it seems almost like old times, stores are filled with shoppers, merchandise is beginning to fly off

the shelves. Yes, it is beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go.

So it seems strange that our Gospel reading for today at first glance has nothing at all to do with Christmas. No mention of John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord, that comes in a week or two. In fact, there is no mention of Mary and Joseph, or the baby Jesus. Nothing at all about His birth. This text is all about His death. It is something that would seem to be more appropriate in the season of Lent, before Palm Sunday and the time when Jesus rides on the back of a donkey into the streets of Jerusalem. Yes, this passage would fit nicely there, but here, on the first Sunday in Advent?

This passage is exactly what we need to hear as we begin our Christmas celebration. Sadly, we get all too caught up in all of the extracurriculars of Christmas, the Christmas cards, the giving and exchanging of gifts, the holiday food and parties, that we forget the real reason for Christmas. And our text for today in the Gospel of Luke serves as a corrective for us, a wake up call, if you will, to remind us: **THE REAL REASON FOR CHRISTMAS.**

We hear today Christians saying that we need to celebrate the real reason for the season, that is, in saying that there needs to be an emphasis on celebrating the birth of Jesus. Well, not so fast. For you see the real reason for

the birth of Jesus is seen in Jesus' death on the cross. The real reason for the season is that Jesus not only needed to be born, but He needed to live, die and rise again to save sinners.

We all need to be reminded of that fact. So many times it gets lost in the shuffle. Each of us comes to church with all sorts of different baggage, and what I mean by that is that each of us comes to church with different burdens and issues. We all have different things going on in our lives, health scares, job changes, friction in relationships. Each of us are trying to navigate our lives through uncertain times. Our anxiety levels are raised and our fears are real.

And in the midst of these anxieties and fears Jesus comes to us. To remind us of why He came. The reason why He was born. He didn't come down from heaven to live a good life, to fulfill some earthly pleasures. He came down from heaven to do the will of His Father, Jesus was born for you. He lived for you. He lived for others. He went throughout the regions of Jerusalem and Gallilee, seeking those who were hurting, anxious, and afraid. He reached out to the sick, the deaf, and the dying. And He did this because God from eternity loved His creation.

God doesn't desire the death of a sinner, He truly wants all to be saved and come to a saving faith in Jesus. So God the Father sent His one and only Son, to be born of the Virgin Mary, to be the sin bearer and sin substitute for

the entire human race. Jesus was born for this specific purpose, to die on a cross just as the Bible predicted: “cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree.” Jesus was cursed, damned for your sins. His death was no accident, it was planned by the Father and revealed when Adam and Eve fell from grace when He said to the Serpent: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” God sent Jesus to defeat all the forces of evil, to defeat sin, Satan, and death for you. He came to bear your sin and be your Savior, to forgive you all of your sin and to give you the certainty that nothing can or will ever separate you from the love of God which is yours in Christ Jesus.

That is why we begin this new church year and this season of Advent with this Gospel lesson and this important reminder, that no matter the day on the calendar year or the church year, no matter the time on the clock, no matter what Bible passage we are reading, this is the reason we gather together in church, this is the reason why we sing our hymns, this is the reason why we read the Bible, and this is the reason we come to the altar to celebrate Holy Communion, for Jesus came to save sinners, to save you, and to save me to bring forgiveness, life and salvation.

So no matter who you are, and no matter what problems you face, hear the Good News of Christmas today and always. To you is born in the city of

David a Savior, He is Christ the Lord. He comes to you today, not on the back of a donkey, but He comes to you in His Word. He comes to you in, with, and under the bread and wine. To love you, to forgive you, and to save you. And that is the reason for Christmas.

Amen