



November 30/December 1-2, 2024 – First Sunday of Advent

Preacher: Pastor Scott Oelhafen

Sermon Text: Luke 19: 28-42

Sermon Theme: Jesus Is the King of Hearts

²⁸After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰"Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.' " ³²Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴They replied, "The Lord needs it." ³⁵They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ³⁸"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" ³⁹"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" ⁴¹"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." ⁴²As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes."

Dear Friends of Jesus,

With Thanksgiving this past week, you may have played games with your family and friends using a deck of cards like this one. If you went to Wisconsin, you probably played Sheepshead. If you went to Michigan, you probably played Euchre. And if you went anywhere else you probably played Crazy Eights. But in addition to playing games, in Civil War times, soldiers would use their cards as a calendar and Bible. Here's how that worked: when I count the number of "markings" in a deck of cards; I find 365, the number of each day of the year. There are 52 cards in a deck, the number of weeks in a year. There are four suits, the number of weeks in a month. There are 12 picture cards, the number of months in a year. But, this deck of cards also reminds us of important Bible facts. When I look at the Ace ... it reminds me that there is but one God, the God of the Bible who reveals Himself to us in majesty and might. The Deuce... it reminds me that the Bible is divided into two parts, the Old and New Testament and two teachings, the Law and the Gospel. When I look at the Three... I think of the Trinity... the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When I see the Four... I think of the evangelists who preached the gospel, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. When I see the Five... it reminds me of the five virgins who were wise and trimmed their lamps and the other five who were foolish and were shut out of heaven. And when I see the Six... It reminds me that in six days God made this great Heaven and Earth. When I see the

Seven... It reminds me that on the seventh day, God rested from His great work. When I see the Eight... I think of the eight people in Noah's family God saved when he destroyed this earth in a flood. When I see the Nine... I think of the nine lepers our Savior cleansed but who failed to return to give proper thanks to him. And when I see the Ten... I think of the Ten Commandments that God handed down on the stone tablets to Moses. When I see the Jack... It is the Devil. When I see the Queen... I am reminded that by God's grace I am made the bride of Christ. And when I see the King... I am reminded that there is but one King of Heaven and Earth -- He is not a King of Clubs who rules by force, He is not a King of spades who conquers by the sword, He is not even the King of Diamonds who lives in earthly wealth.... **HE IS THE KING OF HEARTS, JESUS CHRIST.** There is only one King of Hearts..... **JESUS IS THE KING OF HEARTS.** As we review Luke's Gospel today, we'll hear how **Jesus' love for us filled his heart.** And we'll hear how **His love for us rules our hearts.**

Our sermon reading sounds more like a Holy Week text than an Advent text. But, in order to have a real Christmas, we need to understand why Christ came. Christ came as a promised king to save and our reading shows us in living color how Jesus came as a king like no other. As Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Gospel writer Matthew tells us in a parallel account that ***"a very large crowd" gathered*** and that ***"the whole city was stirred and asked, 'Who is this?'"*** Jesus' reputation had preceded him because of His miracles – He did what no one else could do. He did what only God can do. Just a short time before our sermon reading, Jesus had raised Lazarus who had been dead for three days. Healing people, feeding large crowds, raising the dead... that's not the kind of news people keep to themselves. Oh yes, people had heard about Jesus and they had questions about His identity, ***"Who is this?"***.

Historical records kept by the High Priest tell us how many people attend Passover each year in Jerusalem. You might wonder how they did that. The High Priest would simply keep track of how many lambs were used. One lamb would feed 10 people. It is recorded that the number of Passover lambs used about the year Jesus enter Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was 256,500. Assuming that each lamb fed 10 people that would account for least 2.5 million people in Jerusalem for the Passover. And now think of it... ***"the whole city was stirred"*** ... and why? Because Jesus was in town! People knew about Jesus. He was a celebrity on par with Taylor Swift or a presidential candidate. The real question is this: what did they believe about Jesus? ***"Who is this?"***

In the crowd that day there were certainly people who knew the right answer. There were people who knew that this was the promised Messiah... ***"the Lamb of God who was coming to take away the sins of the world"***. Maybe the 10 lepers were there – those whose skin had been cleansed and their lives restored? Maybe Jairus' daughter was there - back to life again after experiencing death. And maybe even Lazarus, Mary & Martha were all there and knew who this was.

No doubt there were believers in the crowd. But, it's likely believers were few and far between. I think for the most part, out of the millions of people in Jerusalem that day, most did not know or understand that Jesus was their Savior from sin and simply praised him as Luke says, **"for all the miracles they had seen"**. **"Who is this?"**, they asked. Many Jews were looking for a king, an earthly king who could finally reestablish the throne of David, push the Romans out, and take Israel back to its glory days. Jesus was a King all right – but a different kind of King. Jesus was the King of Hearts.

As Jesus neared Jerusalem, he was at the end of his busy three year ministry. Try to picture it in your mind. Luke says: , **"When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God, 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!'"**

It seemed like everybody was rejoicing and celebrating... everyone except the King of Hearts. His heart was breaking. Jesus was crying.

Normally we don't think of Jesus crying on Palm Sunday... but for Jesus it was a sad day indeed. Yes Jesus knew that he was going into Jerusalem to suffer and die on a cross to pay for the sins of the whole world. But that's not why he was crying. Jesus cried because in Jerusalem he saw millions of people who did not believe in him as their only Savior from sin, and who would be lost forever in hell. **"Who is this?"** It's a question that breaks the heart of the King of Hearts... because if you do not know Jesus is your Savior from sin, you cannot be saved either. It's the most important relationship in your life. Realize my friends Jesus' love for you fills his heart... a deeper love than any parent who loves their child. Think of how it must have broken his heart to hear those whom he loved so much to say, **"Who is this?"** Listen as I read Luke 19:41-44. **"As He approached Jerusalem & saw the city, He wept over it & said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you & encircle you & hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you & the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.'"**

"Who is this!?" What a question! Praise God it not a question that we find ourselves asking in doubt or uncertainty. What we witness during Holy Week is nothing short of the greatest battle ever waged. We know why King Jesus went to Jerusalem. We know that King Jesus was going to wage a war that only he could fight, against the ultimate evil of sin and Satan that only he could win. By, God's grace, we know who Jesus is... he is our Savior who said, "I love you with all my heart"... "I love you this much"... and stretched out his hands on the cross where he died for us." Jesus says, **"We love because he first loved us... If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."** In other words, when we speak of the Jesus being with us we know that it doesn't mean it's just his memory that's with us. He's actually with us right here, right now, as our King in charge of our lives. And He knows exactly what we need. Think of it this way...

Are you ever lonely? So was he. Are you ever sad? So was he. Are you ever tempted? So was he. Are you ever anxious? So was he. Are you ever in pain or sick, or near death? Then look to him on Calvary! Don't tell me that this God-man who sweats and bleeds and dies and cries out "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" doesn't know how we feel in our hardest moments. He was forsaken by God on the cross so we would never be forsaken again!

Jesus is the King, the King of OUR Hearts. It means that through faith he actually ***"makes his home with us"*** and lives and rules our hearts! When God's Word is here in our hearts, then so is Jesus. When the love of Jesus is in our hearts, when Jesus is the King of our hearts, everything changes. Yes, there is but one King of Heaven and Earth -- He is not a King of Clubs who rules by force, He is not a King of spades who conquers by the sword, He is not a King of Diamonds who lives in earthly wealth.... **HE IS THE KING OF HEARTS, JESUS CHRIST**. Let's expect no one else. Let us serve no one else. And let us share Him with every one else. AMEN.