

Lenten Devotional April 2, 2023 – Palm Sunday

Scripture

Zechariah 9:9-12

- ⁹ *Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*
- ¹⁰ *He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall command peace to the nations;
his dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.*
- ¹¹ *As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.*
- ¹² *Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.*

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. Jim Graham '66

It's Palm Sunday. Though it's also Passion Sunday, preventing us from jumping from triumphal entry to resurrection, and missing Jesus' pain and death on the cross. Jesus' ride into Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week still speaks powerfully as a visual of who he was and is to us, and how we might reflectively follow him.

It was a demonstration, a march on Jerusalem, an expression of how things should be. This was brought home to me in 1968 when Palm Sunday fell three days after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., known for his peaceful protests. Jesus was trying to tell/show us something, even though its meaning was lost on the crowd that followed him into the city that day, when he chose to fulfill the vision of the prophet Zechariah, proclaiming that lordship, leadership, authority come with a large dose of humility.

I love to illustrate that by reading verse 9:9 aloud, with deliberate crescendo: "Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he," then pausing and saying softly, "*humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey!*"

Whether it's politics, business, church, family, or any context in which we're called to lead others, we're called to do so with humility—not lording it over them, but by demonstrably serving them.

Let us pause and reflect, on this Palm Sunday, how we may better follow Jesus who fulfilled, and fulfills through us, Zechariah's vision of humble service. God's image!

Prayer

Lord of all, you sent Jesus to save us from self-righteousness and to set before us a humble servant way of life. When we are bossy leaders, make us kind and understanding; when we are proud, bring us down some, that we may demonstrate before others what it means to be followers of Jesus Christ and your servant people. Amen.