**Matthew 21:1-11**

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, **2** saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. **3** If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” **4** This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, **5**  “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’ ” **6** The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. **7** They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. **8** Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. **9** And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” **10** And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” **11** And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

**“Salvation Comes”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. Where the church always seems to be trying to keep up with the culture, today the culture is behind the church. January 1st becomes overshadowed by December 1st this year as it marks the start of a whole new church year. Just as we look forward to the turning of time each year, so the season of Advent turns our attention to look to the eternal treasure coming in Jesus Christ. Instead of New Year’s resolutions with promises that never seem entirely fulfilled or satisfying. A new church year lets us hear the resolve of God that does not fail. It comes by the Gospel for all to believe and not lose hope in Jesus Christ.

We need this good news of the Savior, especially in a holiday season when cheerfulness becomes marketed for the sole purpose to spend, spend, spend. Advent takes a couple of steps back from the hype reminding us that suffering is still very real in a broken world. Despair fills hearts and minds over painful situations that seem to have no way out. Sadness creeps in dampening a “cheerful” season with loved ones that have left. Anger flares up as regret hangs over the picture we had wanted to see. Sin, death, and the Devil appear unchanged, but the Gospel reading shows us One daring enough to enter the darkness. Throughout all the generations of man Christ has come whether as a promise of old, a present reality fulfilled by His Word and Sacraments or for all to see on the Last Day. Salvation comes as God’s act of love let us look to His glory.

Looking to Christ begins not with eyes, but with ears to hear. His love of salvation gloriously upholds the scripture. When Jesus told his disciples to go and get the donkey and colt. St. Matthew tells us, “This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet…” God has always been speaking His promise of salvation. Ever since The Fall, corruption is the one guarantee upon all the children of Adam and Eve. What none can fully see in any age God sees and so He alone speaks to save. Jesus’ Words and actions had direct connection to Old Testament Scripture to show that sinners are safe in Him. The Son of God did not use His freedom to do whatever He wanted, but upheld faithfulness to The Word. All who trusted in the prophets could trust Him for as said, “Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”

The fulfillment of Scripture seems like a passé or outdated thing to talk about today. When something is done, we move on asking, “What’s next?” There is no “next” or anything “above” the Word God speaks out of love for sinners. This standard of Scripture as the only authority for salvation is how the book of Hebrews begins. “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son…”(1:1-2). The kingly nature of Scripture receives its crowning glory in Christ. He comes as Savior and Lord so that no burdened sinner is driven away from the Word. Instead, all can draw closer to what we hear spoken by God since He truly does come to save. This faithfulness finally falls on Jesus who is king of our lives by baptism into His Name. All that we have from Him means learning to believe what He brings delivers from sin, death, and the devil.

The praise from the crowd over Christ has become the confession of His Church. His love of salvation gloriously is humble with forgiveness. Around the Sacrament of His true body and blood we say, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” Only the sacrifice of Jesus has reconciled the wrath of God for everyone. A warring world of sinners imagines love rests in our hands when it first and finally comes alone from Christ who works to forgive. Isaiah noted how people would notice the Gospel. They would proclaim, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord… that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” Remember the kind of King Christ is and the glory of His mountain. He does not conquer and control like others, but suffers and dies. What we see at the cross is judgment, but what we hear is Jesus justify by His Word.

Forgiveness is what we need now more than ever in these Last Days. Not on our terms and demands, but from the King who saves by His Word. This is what we prayed for saying, “Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and save by Your mighty deliverance.” Forgiveness from Jesus releases you from the Law, overlooks the depth of your sin, nor holds it against you. His sole purpose is to saved the dammed, justify the guilty, and defend the weak. Luther remarks, “All their sins would not have undone the Jewish people, if only this awful sin of despising God’s visitation had not be added…, for Christ, their King had come to help them. But when a person refuses to hear God’s Word and despises it, he is beyond all counseling and help” (Postils 22). The Gospel is meant for us and Christ shows it by His Word and Sacraments in our life. Thankfulness is the answer while rejection denies the only king that can forgive.

Such determination by God to save with forgiveness surely causes a disturbance. His love of salvation gloriously stirs up hearts to hear the **t**ruth. Anytime this king of the cross receives praise questions are bound to come up. “And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” The crowd answered Jesus to be “The prophet.” Little did any know how true the words were. His death would prove what He preached and His resurrection was the confirmation of it all. God still startles this world with what Jesus brings out love. If the law can be summarized as “love your neighbor as yourself,” then the baptized have a fulfilling answer for these questionable times of what love is. We look to Christ alone for love and to love. St. Paul tells us, “For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand.”

Advent ushers in a need to start this New Year with repentance. The days grow darker as we head closer to Christmas. Only One light shines and so it is at the end of our life or on the Last Day. Yet, Christ cannot be defeated and His baptized shine with hope unhindered. In the third book of The Lord of the Rings entitled “Return of the King.” It describes what seemed to be the only solution the eye could see, but there was something else to hear. “Gandalf! I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead myself. Is everything sad going to come untrue? What's happened to the world?" A great Shadow has departed," said Gandalf, and then he laughed and the sound was like music, or like water in a parched land; and as he listened the thought came to Sam that he had not heard laughter, the pure sound of merriment, for days upon days without count.”[[1]](#footnote-1) So too baptized Christians, our Hosannas to this king join all the heavenly saints in glory laughing in awe of Him who loves us. Salvation comes as God’s act of love let us look to His glory. Amen. Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding be with your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2964424-the-return-of-the-king [↑](#footnote-ref-1)