

SCRIPTURE READINGS AND SERMON

First Sunday of Advent

November 28, 2021

Psalm 25:1–10 (ESV):

1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, in you I trust;

let me not be put to shame;

let not my enemies exult over me.

3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;

they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

teach me your paths.

5 Lead me in your truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation;

for you I wait all the day long.

6 Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,

for they have been from of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

according to your steadfast love remember me,

for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

8 Good and upright is the LORD;

therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

9 He leads the humble in what is right,

and teaches the humble his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,

for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

First Reading: Jeremiah 33:14–16 (ESV):

The Lord's Eternal Covenant with David

14 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 15 In those days and at that time I will cause

a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 16 In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

EPISTLE: 1 Thessalonians 3:9–13 (ESV):

9 For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, 10 as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

11 Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, 12 and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13 so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Gospel: Luke 19:28–40 (ESV):

The Triumphal Entry

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."

Sermon 48 – First Sunday of Advent

“Unstoppable Glory”

Luke 19:28-40

Dear friends,

Advent is all about coming, waiting, and becoming. This Gospel lesson is about coming, a coming king, and for you it is a reminder of your own becoming, what you were made by this King and what this King has promised for you. We're going to talk about promises this Advent, and this text fits in with that very well. A bunch of promises from the Old Testament are being fulfilled here, and what Jesus is doing fits in with an expected action. People see Jesus doing this and they understand what it means, and they're right, but they've missed some details. What is the kingdom of heaven? Is it an earthly nation with an actual king that you can go up to and touch? No. What is the kingdom of heaven? It is the church which comes from every nation, the true believers who live in every nation, coming together around the true King Jesus, His body and His blood and His words. Jesus is building a new kingdom here, the disciples following Him see this, and they rejoice. So what is there to learn here? Not much, honestly. This isn't about new information. This text doesn't educate us so much as remind us, and give us symbols and connections to strengthen those reminders.

In the first verses of the chapter, before our text begins, Jesus talks to Zaccheus, a wee little man, and in response to some of the objections He hears, tells the parable of the ten minas. This is like the parable of the talents, someone in authority goes away and leaves stewardship to servants, but the ending is much harsher and the stakes seem much higher. Jesus uses this parable as an illustration of the disconnection between people and their God, between the Jewish religious leadership and the Messiah that they claim they are waiting for. This disconnection, this alienation, is only going to be highlighted in the triumphal entry itself and Jesus' words and actions afterward. Jesus is not interested in

playing nice with the religious leaders anymore. He is not out to please them. He is out to reveal the truth about Himself. That is what these stories are for.

I'm going to paraphrase the first bits. Jesus instructs the disciples to grab someone's colt in a nearby village, telling them to respond in a certain way. Why does He do this? Again, Jesus wants His arrival at Jerusalem to make an impression and to send a message. Jesus is revealing Himself, He's preaching about who He is, through actions like this. Throughout Israelite history, this is how kings would return to the capital city after victory in war. If you returned in triumph, sitting on an animal like this, with a celebrating crowd like this, it sent a message. The war was over, and I won. The nation is saved. We are at peace. That's how Jesus wants these people to see His arrival, like a conquering king who is going back to the throne, and when He gets back, the first thing that king would do would be to go to the temple and offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Acknowledging the victory was not his but God's victory, a gift from above.

Jesus was about to do all of these things, just not in the way that the people of Israel – even His own disciples – anticipated. Jesus is marching triumphantly, He is the conquering king, and He is going into the temple to offer sacrifice to God in thanksgiving for victory. He is all of these things in this moment. Where you find the truth of it is in how He flips the people's expectations on their heads. Jesus has not gone out to fight an earthly enemy. No. Jesus is going INTO the city to fight our oldest enemy, ourselves, our sinful flesh, our constant need to be God. He's not waging a war with swords or spears, He's going in to offer His own blood, His own suffering, and His own life as atonement for our sins. Our war is against God, and we fight it with every breath we take. That is what it means to be a sinner, it is to be God's enemy, hostile to Him. Through this offering that He will make, He will win peace not just for the nation of Israel, but peace between us and God, by ending that war for good. If there is no sin, there is no longer any need for us to rebel against God. If there is no sin, there is no longer any need for God to be angry with us. The strife has ended.

Jesus is not only revealing He is the Messiah, He is talking about what the Messiah is there to do. The Messiah is there to be our victor, to win in a way that we never could've

managed on our own. We're just sinners and we're locked into that, nothing can get us out of it. Jesus goes into the city to be mocked, crucified, and die in order to get us out of it, to change the sinner part. The Messiah is there to die, to die at the hands of sinful men, and through that death will be our victory. Like the kings of old, this victory would be a gift from God, but the gift this time would be God's own Son.

So that's what Jesus is showing here, and the disciples seem to get it. In Luke, the word "disciple" encompasses everybody who believes in Jesus, it isn't just the twelve apostles. So there is a hefty crowd here to cheer Him on. They are throwing their coats on the ground for the colt to walk on, a show of loyalty, and they're waving palm branches, a sign of victory. Their words are telling, and not random: **"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"** This is a paraphrase of some parts of Psalm 118, it isn't a direct quote but a kind of summarizing of the point of the whole thing. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. Peace in heaven is about to be done, Jesus is about to do it. Peace in heaven between God and men, peace available for you all in heaven when God calls you to heaven. Glory in the highest. This isn't just a teacher, this isn't just a prophet, this is the Son of God, the true king of Israel, from David's own bloodline, here to win the ultimate victory and so deserving of the ultimate triumph.

The response to this is telling. **"39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."** The Pharisees understand with total clarity everything that I have just told you. If everything Jesus is doing is sending a message, the Pharisees have received that message loud and clear, and from this point on when they talk about Jesus it is only to plan out how they will kill him. They tell Jesus to quiet His people down. Why? The Pharisees understand but they do not believe it. They understand that Jesus thinks He is the Messiah, that Jesus thinks He is God, and they hate him for it. They want Him dead for it. Maybe because it threatens their power, maybe because they think He's crazy, but they understand. He is a threat to them, and they tell Him to control His people. Jesus' response is priceless. **"40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."**

You cannot stop God's glory. You cannot do it. We pray in the Lord's prayer that His name be hallowed, that God be glorified, but God doesn't require those prayers. God is God, and sinful humans cannot stop God from being God. That may sound banal, but it is exceedingly important to remember in these last days. Remember what God's glory means. What is God's glory? It's not just how powerful God is, how awesome God is, how God knows everything. God's glory is His saving work, God's glory is to send His son to suffer and die for you. God's glory is to turn everything to your good. God's glory is to take care of you the way a shepherd cares for His sheep. That is God's glory, and that cannot be stopped.

You and I are not trying to do so, at least not consciously, but many are. The world, the devil, they want to stamp out God's glory and replace it with their own glory. They want to tear down God's Word and replace it with their own fabricated truth. Hear this, and remember this story. God will not let them. God will have His glory, God will have you, God will save His elect, and nothing will stop Him from doing so. In the same way, God will take care of you, God will see to your needs. God will cut off all evil from this earth, He has already done so. Jesus was the surgeon's knife cutting the cancer of sin from us, that is already done, there is no stopping it or changing it. Even you, when you give in to your sin, when you surrender to that ugly you that wants everything all its own way, you cannot stop God turning it to your good. Your sin is not enough to disgust God, it is not enough to chase Him away. He will not forsake you for your sins, because your sins are already dead. The world cannot lie to itself loudly enough to drown out God, no matter how hard it tries, because it too is already dead. The end is coming. Rather than being dreadful of that end, rejoice in that end. It is God's end. He's already written it.

Amen.