

There’s a song in Hebrew that is often sung at weddings. It’s called “Hava Nagila.” It means “Come, let us rejoice!” At Jewish weddings they will lift the bride and the groom up on chairs and sing “Hava Nagila.” The Hebrew word “gil” means “to rejoice.” It’s the same word that the prophet used in our passage for today, **“Rejoice greatly!” (Zechariah 9:9)**. Just like a wedding is a time to rejoice, Palm Sunday is also a day to rejoice. The prophet Zechariah talked about Palm Sunday long before it ever happened. And today the prophet says to us:

Rejoice! Your King is Coming to You!

- I. He shows you the way of humility.**
- II. He speaks to you words of peace.**

I. He shows you the way of humility.

Why does Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey? Most kings would have ridden into the city on a war-horse or in a chariot. War-horses and chariots were a sign of strength and power. But in the Old Testament God told the people not to trust in human power. Instead, they were to rely on God. In the book of Isaiah, it says, **“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD” (Isaiah 31:1)**. Horses and chariots were a sign of human strength and God didn’t want them to rely on human strength. That’s why in our passage from Zechariah it says: **“I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem” (Zechariah 9:10)**.

Do we sometimes put our trust in human power rather than in God? Do we ever become arrogant in our own abilities and strength? When we are presented with a big problem we sometimes try to solve it by our own ability and strength without first going to the Lord in prayer?

Rejoice that our King shows us the way of humility. **“See, your king comes to you ... lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9)**. He doesn’t come riding into Jerusalem on a war-horse with a grand show of human power. He comes riding on a lowly donkey. He humbly submitted himself to the will of his Father, even though he knew that the will of his Father was that he die on the cross.

Our passage says, **“See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious” (Zechariah 9:9)**. The Hebrew word for **“victorious”** here literally means **“saved.”** The idea was that he was saved by God in battle and so he is victorious. Jesus put his life into the hands of his Father. On the cross, he said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” And then God rescued him by raising him from the dead and making him victorious over death. Jesus humbly submitted himself to God’s will and then God exalted him. That’s exactly what it said in our 2nd lesson today: **“He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:8-11)**. Christ humbly placed himself into his Father’s hands and the Father raised Christ from the dead and made him the ruler of the whole world. Our passage says, **“He will reign from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Zechariah 9:10)**.

Just like Jesus became lowly, we should also become humble and lowly. We should not be arrogant. When we face problems, we should go to the Lord in prayer and ask him for the strength to solve it. Jesus showed us the way of humility when he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and humbly submitted to death on a cross. Just like God raised Jesus up, God will also raise us up when we are humble and rely on him.

Rejoice that your King shows you the way of humility. And also rejoice because your King comes to you and speaks to you words of peace.

The prophet tells us to rejoice: **“Rejoice greatly, daughter Zion. Shout, daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you,” (Zechariah 9:9).** We can rejoice that Jesus came to Jerusalem that first Palm Sunday because we know that the reason he came to Jerusalem was to save us from our sins. If Jesus had not come to Jerusalem, if he would have gotten onto the donkey and rode in other direction then I would spend eternity in hell. But here he is! He came to Jerusalem even though he knew he would die there. Instead of running in the other direction he came to Jerusalem to die for your sins and mine. He came to Jerusalem for you. He came to Jerusalem for me. That’s reason to rejoice and be glad.

Rejoice! Your King is Coming to You! And he speaks to you words of peace. Our passage says, **“He will proclaim peace to the nations” (Zechariah 9:10).** Christ came to Jerusalem that first holy week in order to establish peace between us and God. In the book of Colossians it says that God the Father **“made peace through Christ’s blood, shed on the cross” (1:20).** The Bible says that God has wrath over sin. But Christ stepped in and took that wrath in our place. The book of Romans says, **“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him” (Romans 5:9).** Christ’s death has reconciled us to God so that there is now peace between us and God. Peace is not only the absence of conflict. It is also the presence of blessing. Because Christ took away our sins and rose again, we will live in the blessedness of God’s kingdom forever.

Rejoice! Your King comes to you in his word and in his sacrament and he speaks to you words of peace. **“He will proclaim peace to the nations” (Zechariah 9:10).** He speaks to us words of peace in the Lord’s Supper. **“This is my body given for you. This is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins”** Notice it says in our passage that he will proclaim peace *to the nations*. Sometimes that word is translated “Gentiles.” Gentiles are people who are not of Jewish descent. Jesus is Jewish and he came to his people the Jews. But the good news is also for us Gentiles. The book of Ephesians says, **“For he himself is our peace ... He came and preached peace to you who were far away [the Gentiles] and peace to those who were near [the Jews]. For through him we both [both Jews and Gentiles] have access to the Father by one Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:14, 17-18).** Through faith we Gentiles are also included in his kingdom of peace. His kingdom is for people of every nation of the world. That’s why the prophet says that his reign will extend beyond the borders of Israel, **“His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Zechariah 9:10).** Rejoice that through faith you also are included in his reign of peace. The Bible says let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts (Colossians 3:15).

So just like we have reason to rejoice at a wedding or at a holiday party, we have reason to rejoice on palm Sunday. Rejoice! Your King Comes to you. He shows you the way of humility and he speaks to you words of peace. Amen.