

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ,

Behold, your King is coming to you, and at the sight of Him, as the Epistle said,

**"every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."**

On that day, none will resist Him. None shall be able to hide from Him.

Not even death shall prohibit anyone from paying the proper homage due Him.

At the judgment, creation's King shall declare:

either, **"Come, you blest of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you..."** Matthew 25:34

or,

"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41

There will be no appeals court. No second chances. No opportunities for parole.

So it behooves us to listen to our King of Grace today,

to have His image imprinted on our hearts continually,

so that when He returns as the King of Glory, we may be among those who cry out for the last time,

"Save now," that is Hosanna: "Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!"

We read as follows in Jesus' name:

[Jesus said,] 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. ... They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and He sat on them. ... 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!" (ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. (John 17:17)

A miracle occurred on this day that perhaps escapes many of our city-slicker ears.

The evangelists don't specifically point it out; they just report what happened that day.

I am not talking about how Jesus knew about the donkey and her colt ahead of time - also a miracle; but I'm talking about a detail about the colt that both St. Mark and St. Luke report:

Jesus told them to bring back the colt **on which no one has ever sat.** Mark 11:2; Luke 19:30

If you know much about horses, mules, and donkeys, then you know what a miracle it would be for one that has never been ridden to bear someone in a parade without incident.

Equine do not naturally like to have anything on their backs, much less a human.

But they can be broken, that is, they can be trained, or disciplined, to tolerate, even enjoy, the burden.

And here, we have Jesus, on His triumphal entry into Jerusalem

choosing to take on an untrained beast of burden amidst the throng of the festival pilgrims,

palm branches and cloaks being waved out in front of it, loud acclamations, and loads of energy.

Do you suppose the disciples looked at each other wondering if Jesus knew what He was doing?

For anyone else, even a "horse whisperer," this would be an impossible expectation.

And yet... the colt lets Him, and no incidents of a wild donkey rampage are reported.

The ancient church fathers saw in this detail a picture of our Lord's lordship, not only over creation, which it was, but also over His people.

Like an unbroken colt, our corrupt human nature kicks against bearing burdens, especially if they are someone else's burdens.

We do not want to be reined in or trained (we could call it disciplined).

Your flesh does not want to submit to the will of its Creator.

As St. Paul says, **For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.** Romans 8:7

Dr. Luther repeats this in our Confession of the 3rd Article,

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him...

Sin and evil are such a total corruption in our natural state that even upon hearing of God's grace, even after having been enlightened to Christ's self-sacrificial life and death, Isaiah's picture of Israel's rebellion rings true for us as well:

"Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against Me.

The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, My people do not understand." Isaiah 1:2-3

Even the irrational beasts of burden put us to shame.

Not only do they understand where their food comes from, and to return there to be fed,

but they also know how to respond appropriately to their Lord's presence,

as evidenced by the miracle of Jesus gently riding into Jerusalem on an unbroken colt of a donkey.

Even with the gift of a rational mind, we irrationally rebel against our Lord's presence and His grace.

Though He comes to do us good and teach us of our salvation and to forgive us,

we ignore Him, we strive against Him, we disown Him.

But as Jesus said to Saul at his conversion, **"It is hard for you to kick against the goads."** Acts 26:14

meaning, that it pains our conscience to continually reject our Lord's teaching and salvation.

And yet, our Lord is patient. He knows the depth of our corruption.

(He should know because He paid for every bit of it later that week upon the cross.)

And so, like a master trainer, He does not come to us with a rod of iron and beat us into submission.

As Zechariah and St. Matthew proclaim, **'Behold, your King is coming to you, humble...'**

That humility marked His entire life.

In fact, it is a defining characteristic of Jesus as the Epistle pointed out:

Philippians 2:6-7

Though He was in the form of God, [He] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Though He was God, while in His state of humiliation, He did not "lord it over" anyone.

But as He said, **"the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,**

and to give His life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:28.

And so He did, willingly riding into Jerusalem on a beast of burden on Palm Sunday

so that He would bear the burden of the entire world's sin on Good Friday.

Matthew 28:18

Even now, in His state of exaltation as **all authority has been given to Him in heaven and on earth,**

He still comes to rule your heart and mind with gentleness.
Having already given His life as a ransom for you, He still comes to you today to serve you.
He does not force anyone to submit to Him during our time of grace on this earth.
No, in your time of grace, He comes to you in humble ways.
He calls to you over and over so that you become familiar with His voice, and learn to trust Him,
as He calls you to repentance and to faith.
So that, like Saul, who later was known as St. Paul, you may be converted from death to life.

...

Our conversion truly is a miracle of God, of His grace and His patience.
And today, we will see/saw such a miracle as young Violet Brown is/was brought to Holy Baptism.
There her Savior will gently wash away her sins and she will become/became a child of God.
And today, our congregation/we will witness this miracle confirmed in Rick and Janelle Seaton
who will join us in confessing the gentleness of our Savior as He comes to us
to nourish us with His own crucified and risen Body and Blood under simple bread and wine.
These are truly the miracles our Lord performs today and every day as our hearts are gently turned
from sin and death to righteousness and life.

Thank God! your Lord Jesus Christ is good at taking stubborn... donkeys, like us,
and humbly and gently turning our wild and self-willed natures into His own beloved children.
Thank God that He continues to patiently prepare us for when He comes again in glory.

On that day as the Epistle says, your knee shall bow, and willingly, just as you now bow before Him;
On that day, your tongue will confess willingly and joyfully that Jesus is your Lord,
just as you do on this day, and every day when the Lord gathers His Church gathers to receive the
Holy Communion, and we
crying out together "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."
Indeed, "Save now, O King!" Amen!

Soli Deo Gloria