**SEE, YOUR KING COMES TO YOU**

March 24, 2019

Matthew 21:1-22

Key Verse 21:5 “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

When you hear the word, “king,” how do you feel? Some may become nervous and anxious, feeling that he will violate all our human rights and oppress us. But Jesus is not that kind of king at all. Jesus is the Savior King. He never forces anyone to submit to him. But he embraces all who accept him as their Savior King. It is very important to know who is the king of our life. Is Jesus your king? Or does another king sit on the throne of your heart? Many people want to be their own king. But when we honestly examine ourselves, we are terrible kings of our own lives. We really need our Savior King Jesus to rule over us. Today’s passage is called the “Triumphal Entry.” Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King as prophesied. It was the coronation as the King. It was to conquer and destroy man’s enemy, Satan, and the power of sin through his death on the cross and glorious resurrection. But the day he entered was the day traditionally that the Jews selected their lamb for sacrifice for the Passover, which was Friday that week. Jesus offered himself as the Lamb of God for the whole world. It is unthinkable that the King should die. But it was to fulfill the prophecies. Jesus was in control of everything. He was on a divine schedule. Let’s learn what kind of king Jesus is and accept him in our hearts today.

**First**, Jesus is a gentle and humble king (1-11) Look at verse 1a. “As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives.” Bethphage, along with Bethany, was one of the suburbs of Jerusalem, about 1km away from Jerusalem. Bethphage means the house of figs. You can imagine the town built on a hill covered with fig trees. Most pilgrims who came to attend the Passover stayed in Bethphage and Bethany. Jesus and his disciples also must have stayed at Bethany in the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus (Jn 11).

At this point, Jesus was getting ready to make his entry into Jerusalem. Look at verses 1b-3. “Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.’” The phrase, “The Lord needs them” shows us the Lordship of Christ. Surely the owner of the donkey would ask them, “Why are you untying my donkey without my permission?” Then they were to answer, “The Lord needs them.” This answer would be sufficient. We must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ over our lives, youth, families and possessions. If Jesus tells us, “the Lord needs them,” we must be willing to offer them back to Jesus for him to use them preciously in his work and history. When we offer our lives and possessions back to God, God use them preciously in his salvation work and history and bless us to be great servants of God and a source of blessing to others. Great men and women of God are those who did not claim their lives, talents and possessions as their own but gave them back to God freely and used by God greatly. Let us repent our selfishness. Let us wake up from the illusion that we are the owner of our own lives. Let us acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. Let us hear Jesus’ voice, “the Lord needs you.” Let us give ourselves fully and freely back to Jesus and serve Jesus and his gospel in this generation.

Look at verses 4-5. “This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’” This shows that Jesus is a humble king. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding a colt donkey in order to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah. The mother donkey must have been proud to see her child carrying the Messiah. Since Jesus is the Lord of all things, he should have entered Jerusalem riding high on a white horse on a road surrounded by heavenly armies, like King Charles II of England. He could have displayed his glory to the world as the King of kings and Lord of lords. How could he ride on a colt which he had borrowed from someone else! Not only he rode a colt, but also he served sinners even by dying on the cross like a condemned criminal though he had no sin. It was to become our friend and Savior. His humility had a redemptive purpose.

This scene also shows that Jesus is a king of peace. When a king enters on a donkey, people know that he came to save and rule them in peace. Jesus rode on a colt to claim publicly that he was the chosen Son of David to sit on David’s throne just like Solomon rode on David’s mule on his coronation. (1 Ki 1:33) Zechariah 9:10 says of the Messiah’s work like this, “I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.” Many people say that they want world peace. They mean that they want the world to be free from war and terrorism. But the real peace is to be free from fear. Satan plants fear in all circumstances. Enjoying Satan’s fear is like enjoying roller-coaster rides that do not stop. It paralyzes us and makes us feel bitter, angry, useless and hopeless. Today many students say that they are under great stress. One student committed suicide last Sunday at U of T. It shocked many people. Many students suffer from anxiety and restlessness. But Jesus, the king of peace, restores peace, thankful heart, joy and hope in our hearts in all circumstances. It is like riding on a peaceful donkey together with Jesus. The real peace comes into our hearts when Jesus, our king of peace, rules us with truth and grace. King David said in his famous psalm, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” (Ps 23:4) When Jesus rules our hearts, he gives us true peace. Then we know that our future is in his good, sovereign hand. We can have certainty and assurance of our salvation as well as our future. We can be thankful to God for our present circumstances and make the best of our tough present situations. Paul invites us to overcome Satan’s fear by prayer and thanksgiving and find peace in Jesus, saying, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Php 4:6,7)

**Second**, “Hosanna” (6-11) Look at verse 9. “The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest heaven!’” The word “Hosanna” means “save now!” We don’t know what the people implied when they shouted, “Save now!” Most probably they wanted Jesus to save them from their political and economic problems. Like them, we expect Jesus to save us from all kinds of sufferings such as credit card debts, family problems, school problems. But Jesus came neither to do our will nor his will but God’s will. Jesus came in God’s name. Jesus came as God’s Messiah. God’s will for him was not easy. It was to die on the cross as the Lamb of God in order to take away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). It was a mission impossible for him to carry out. Still Jesus did not hesitate to carry his cross. He did not shrink back; he did not doubt God’s love. He obeyed God’s will unto death, even death on a cross in order to save us from our sins and restore us into glorious children of God. Let us shout together with the crowds: “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

**Third**, Jesus is a righteous and merciful king (12-17). When Jesus entered into Jerusalem, he first entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. “It is written,' he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer,” but you are making it a "den of robbers."'" This picture describes the spiritual condition of the religious leaders. They did not worship God. They did not teach people to worship God. They were most interested in making money from God’s people who came to the temple to worship God. For example, when they wanted to make offerings, they had to change money in temple currency. They charged 25% fee. Poor people who could not afford a lamb could offer a dove or a pigeon which is worth a dollar today. But they charged $10 for them in the temple. They were misusing the temple and they were abusing God’s people, especially the poor. According to Jesus, they were making the temple of God a den of robbers.

Jesus said, “My house will be called a house of prayer.” This verse is the explanation for clearing the temple. This is the starting point of destroying the fortress of Satan. Jesus rebuked them because they blocked God’s people from worshiping God. Jesus rebuked the priests that they made the temple a den of robbers. In the New Testament Times, we are the temple of God. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:16, “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?” While living in this world, our hearts become corrupt with a desire for worldly riches, rather than God’s glory. We need to cleanse our temple daily through repentance.

**Fourth**, King Jesus works through our faith and prayer (18-21). Early the next morning Jesus went from Bethany back to Jerusalem; it was about 3 km. Jesus had not had breakfast and he was hungry (18). Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” Immediately the tree withered (19). It seems that Jesus was cranky because he was hungry just like I am very cranky when I am hungry. It seems that Jesus was unreasonable because Mark’s gospel says that it was not a season for figs. Then why did Jesus curse the fig tree so that immediately the tree withered? Jesus saw this fig tree as a symbol of the nation Israel. Though they had the appearance of religious life, he did not find the fruit he was looking for. What kind of fruit is God looking for? Micah 6:8 says, “What does the LORD require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” The religious leaders were proud, greedy, legalistic, merciless and hardhearted. As a result, the temple became like a den of robbers and the whole nation was badly influenced. This provoked God’s judgment, which came in A.D. 70. Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple was demolished and Israel scattered. Here we must acknowledge that God judges nations and people based on their fruit.

Look at verse 20. “When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. ‘How did the fig tree wither so quickly?’ they asked.” When Jesus cursed the fruitless fig tree, all the abundant and beautiful leaves dried up immediately. Finally the tree was dried up. His disciples wondered how Jesus could have such a mighty power that with a word he dried up such a huge fig tree immediately. They really envied the power of Jesus. Their hearts’ desire was to have mighty power like Jesus and do something great. Sometimes they wanted to perform miraculous signs and wonders before the large crowd of people. But all they could do was just hanging around Jesus and eat and sleep, snoring in chorus. They set the alarm clock to wake up early and have early morning prayer. But they never made it. They turned off the alarm clock. Sometimes they threw the alarm clock out the window. They wanted to be powerful men. But they were totally powerless, and were lazy men. As a result, they were useless disciples. It was because they lacked one thing.

Look at verse 21. “Jesus replied, ‘Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and it will be done.’” This is the second time Jesus talked about the mountain moving faith. He said in 17:20, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” Jesus knew that his disciples were lazy and useless. But Jesus taught them that if they have faith they can move a mountain and throw it into the sea. In other words, if they have faith, they can have a mountain-moving power. Practically speaking, to such powerless disciples this was a totally impossible teaching of Jesus.

Look at verse 21 again. “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and it will be done.” Here “mountain” is a figurative term. It refers to whatever stand in your way. What mountains do you face? What impossible tasks or problems are in your life? The key isn’t fretting, the key isn’t in figuring it out--the key to the answer--the ONLY—key--is by asking God in prayer by faith. When faced with a mountain, we are under panic attack. We should take our focus off of the size of the mountain and focus on the sufficiency of the Mountain-Mover, Jesus Christ. Faith produces miracles. But fear paralyzes man’s heart.

In this passage we learn the humble coronation of King Jesus. Our King entered Jerusalem as the Lamb of God to die on the cross in order to save us from our sins. Let’s accept King Jesus in our hearts. Then he will drive out fear and give us peace. Let’s have faith in God so that we may have mountain-moving power.