

## **Sermon Transcript**

### **Palm Sunday -April 2, 2023**

Grace, mercy in peace be to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. This is a wonderful time of the year. This is the focus of our Christian faith. Everything resolves and revolves around the events of this week. Everything that we celebrate in Christianity is a result of what happened today, is caused by and focused upon the events of today. We do not celebrate Christmas except for the fact of Good Friday and Easter. If Christ did not die, we would not celebrate His birth. In fact, the whole point of his birth was the fact that he was alive. He was God, and yet as God, He did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He humbled Himself and became like us, a God who is near to us, not a God who is far off, a God who understands us, a God who lived with us. And as we face the trials and the tribulations of our day, and there are many, we are reminded that God knows what it is like to be a human being.

He knows what is like to have people adore Him and hate Him all at the same time practically. He knows what it is like to experience loss. Again, one of the more profound verses in all of scripture is the fact when He heard that Lazarus had died was a verse that says, "Jesus wept." Jesus wept, even though He knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, He still wept. Why? Because Lazarus still had to experience the pain of death. Because death was not what God had created us for. God created us for life, but because sin came into the world, we all must face death. And that is the greatest trial, the greatest tribulation, the greatest fear that all humanity has. And how do we face it? Well, for this reason, Christ came. He came to give us hope in the midst of fear. He came also to fulfill all that had been promised of the Messiah throughout all human history.

From the moment Adam and Eve ate the fruit and were kicked out of the garden until He showed up, prophecy, after prophecy, after prophecy about the coming of the Messiah and what He would look like and what He would do. And here we have it finally. And even prophecy that we do not even necessarily recognize. And that is particularly important on today, Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday, Sunday, and then what happens on Thursday? We have the Lord's Supper. We have Holy Thursday; we have what Jesus was doing was celebrating the Passover. Now, in order to celebrate the Passover, you need to kill a lamb to have a Passover feast and to have the sacrifice to God for the atonement of your sins. You also, in the

Old Testament, the first Passover, you needed to kill the lamb, not just to eat, but also to take the blood of that lamb and put it on your doorframe because the blood protected the Israelites from the angel of death passing over.

Now, we talk about the blood of Christ covering us and forgiving our sins, but it is kind of the same thing, protecting us also from the angel of death because in Christ we have life, life everlasting. So, we do not fear the angel of death. We do not fear death itself, which is one of the great and many blessings of knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But why do we face death? We face death because of our sin. And in the Old Testament, God provided the sacrificial system to cover the sins of humanity by the blood of the lambs. He graciously said, you sacrificed this lamb, this goat, this calf, this heifer, these turtle doves. You sacrifice these animals and I will consider it equal with your guilt.

I will not hold your guilt against you because you in faith sacrificed the blood of this animal. Now, that is purely by God's grace. What in the world does a blood of an animal have to do with saving me? Only by God's Word does it do anything. And yet even in that it was a prophecy for the coming of the Messiah because in order to sacrifice a lamb, you needed to pick the lamb. You needed to find a lamb. And there were specific qualities that you needed to look for. It needed to be spotless. It needed to be without blemish or any imperfection at all. No lameness, no disease, no, blemishes, nothing. It had to be a spotless, pure, perfect lamb.

Now, in order to do that, you had to examine it and make sure that everything was okay. And the day that they were examining the lambs for the Passover was today. They chose today, the 10th of the month originally in the Hebrew, they selected the lamb. And on the 14th of the month, they slaughtered the lamb and Palm Sunday, or the equivalent whenever Jesus rode in to Jerusalem on that Sunday, that was the day that they selected the blameless, spotless, pure, perfect lambs to be sacrificed for the Passover meal. And Jesus just so happens to decide that He's going to ride into Jerusalem on that day. Or maybe He planned it that way because He was being selected by the people and by God to be the spotless, blameless, perfect Lamb of God who's going to take away our sins.

So, He rides into Jerusalem to be selected for the slaughter, just as all the other lambs were selected on this very day. And He comes riding in on a donkey, on the colt of a donkey. Now, this is not the way that we would want our conquering Lord to come in. So often we want God to fix things, to make things right. We go

through this miserable world and we got trials and tribulations. I mean, we look around at the news today and we go, "God, can't you fix this? Can't we make it right? I believe in you." But sometimes we look at the cross and we go, "Oh yeah, He came to forgive my sins, but what I really want, I want to be better. I want to feel better. I want to have this. I want to have that. I want the immediate thing solved now, that's the really important part." So we look to God sometimes to solve the immediate rather than recognizing the grand.

He comes, not as we expect or not as we hope. He comes conquering, but not on a war horse, not conquering the nation, not establishing a kingdom. He comes riding on donkey. Now, if you are riding on a horse, even I can look pretty majestic and regal on a horse. It is nice and solid and big. You got a nice saddle and everything, and you can look regal on a horse. There ain't nobody that can look regal on a donkey. It just does not fit. If you've ever seen a donkey and a horse, I mean the donkey is a little bit shorter, a lot shorter, not quite as long, not quite as wide and unruly.

A horse you can guide and train with the reigns to go where you wanted to go. Donkey, you probably got somebody dragging the donkey and leading them because he is going to do what he wants to do. And here's Jesus on the donkey, His feet dragging, practically hitting the ground as He is walking because that is what you do. You sit on a donkey and your legs are practically hanging over the edge and almost touching the ground. You are not regal. You are not majestic in any way, shape, or form, except that He as God and man was regal in and of Himself, except that this was another one of the prophecies as we read in Zachariah, that the king would come riding on the donkey on a foal of a donkey, fulfilling another of the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, of the coming of the Son of God, and the Son of man. We celebrate His humanity because in His humanity, we know that He understands our pain, we know that He understands our sorrow.

But He came not just to understand us, but to free us. He came to conquer, just not conquer what we thought. He came to conquer death itself. This is why we as Christians can face our life and the problems that we have with no fear. On Wednesdays, we have been studying the Book of Revelation for about six months now or so. We have gotten to chapter nine, so I think I am doing pretty good, but we've been studying the Book of Revelation. And so often when we think about Revelation, we think apocalypse, we think Holy War, the world going to hell in a hand basket, everything blowing up and the antichrist coming and Judgment Day

and all sorts of chaos and evil. And it is something that we think is far off. And so, we think Revelation is about the Judgment Day or the very, very, very end. But what we have discovered in our six months of study is that the Book of Revelation is not about the last day, Judgment Day primarily.

The Book of Revelation is really about our day-to-day lives here and now. Every single vision that we see in Revelation is not about something in the future, it is about the here and the now. We are in a world that is living in tribulation. We however, do not suffer tribulation because we are part of the kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom. Therefore, we are His, and we have no fear in that kingdom because in this kingdom, death has been conquered.

And if death has been conquered, there is nothing else to be afraid of, because He has conquered it all. And we have all the blessings that He offers. They are ours today. Now, we may have to deal with the consequences of the tribulation in this world. It may affect us immediately, but it is not that we are suffering tribulation. We live in a world that is suffering, but we are free even in the midst of the chaos of this world because we know that God is here with us for the express purpose of offering us peace and hope and joy. Not for some future hope and joy that we will get someday if we remain faithful to the very end, but a peace and a joy that we have right now. Because in the cross we were baptized into His death. And if we were baptized into His death, then surely, we are also baptized into His resurrection and that is ours today. We are eternal children of God, members of His kingdom today. And because of that, we are not afraid.

We can rejoice even in our suffering because we know that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. And it is a sure and certain hope that when He does finally come on that Judgment Day, we will join the whole multitude of heavenly hosts who have washed the robes in the blood of Christ, and we will sing the eternal praises of God and He will wipe every tear from our eyes. In this world you will have trial. But take heart, I have overcome the world. It is sure and certain and true. He shed His blood to cover us, not temporarily, but for all eternity. And in Him we have peace. May that grace and that mercy and that peace be and abide with you always now and forevermore unto life everlasting. Amen.