

Speaker 1:

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. I love this hymn. Ride on, ride on, in majesty. But have you ever tried to ride a donkey? The term majesty and riding a donkey don't usually go together. Now, a war horse or a horse is impressive. When you ride a horse, you feel majestic. You do. It just feels somehow more powerful and mighty when you're riding a horse, especially like in the TV shows when they rear up on their hind legs and you stay on your saddle and you charge forth into battle. That's majestic. Riding a donkey or a colt of a donkey is anything but. Now remember, donkeys only go about yay high and a colt is a little bit lower than that. Think about your legs. There's no stirrups or anything like that, you're trying to desperately grab around the waist of the donkey and hold onto the mane. It's not majestic in any way, shape or form. It's awkward, it's uncomfortable, and it's just plain silly. That's what it looks to ride a donkey.

Yet here is the king of all creation, God Almighty, come in the flesh writing this silly little beast and probably looking a little awkward doing it. What in the world is that all about? Why would the king of all creation, who is coming into his glory, who is coming to save mankind, why would he come in such a humiliating way? Well, this just continues the theme of his entire life, here on earth, at least. You see in the Epistle lesson, we learned that he did not count equality with God something to be grasped. It says that even though he was in the form of God, now we need to stop there, in the form of God does not mean he looked like God. He had the same shape as God, but he wasn't really God. The Greek makes it very clear that when we use that word in the form of God, what we're really saying is in the same essence as God. In other words, he is God himself as well, God the Father, God the Son, God, the Holy Spirit, of the same essence, but three distinct persons.

So in the form of God, being God himself, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself and humbled himself to take on the form of a servant, to take on the form of a man. Think about his entire life here on earth. It is one of humility and humiliation. The God of the universe through whom everything was created, the word of God, God spoke and things came into existence. This same God is now forced into the little bitty seven or eight pound form that cannot speak or do anything for himself. That had to be humiliating. It was very humbling. It was very much him emptying himself from what he was. True God, master of everything, to little bitty baby, not even able to speak or change his own diapers for that matter.

The theme of humility is a theme of Christ's life. His entire life was one subjecting himself to the law of God. Even though he was perfect. He still offered the sacrifices, he still followed the law completely, even though he was perfect. He did all of this, and now he has just raised Lazarus from the dead. If anything speaks

power and majesty, it's raising somebody from the dead. So every once in a while, the humility of Christ, the majesty breaks forth and the glory of God shines through. This is one of those times, when he raises Lazarus from the death. But again, it was so that people might see that he does have the power over life and death, and in spite of that, he still goes into Jerusalem humble and riding on a donkey.

Now, why does he do it? We understand that from Zechariah that this was a prophecy that he was to follow in the footsteps of David, and he was going to ride on as a servant of the people. But like David, he was the king of all creation, he was the king. People were hoping for this king, who just raised Lazarus from the dead, he would enter into Jerusalem and he would take over. Now exactly how that was going to take place, nobody really knew for sure. But they certainly weren't expecting for him to get arrested, flogged and whipped and then nailed to a cross. That didn't register in anybody's imagination as to how it was all going to work.

But God demonstrates his power through humility, through weakness. He shows his strength because in doing so, he becomes like us. The whole point of him becoming a human being was so that he could restore us to what he had originally created us to be. He didn't necessarily enjoy the humiliation, and he certainly didn't look forward to dying on the cross. That's very clear from his prayer in Gethsemane, dad, father Aba father, if there is any way that you can take this from me, please do it. He wasn't looking forward to dying, but he was willing to obey the will of his father. But why would either one of them bother with us? It had to be a lot more comfortable for Jesus, for God, the son of God, to be in heaven, all-powerful, almighty, no limitations. Yet why does he come to be with us? Why does he humble himself and humiliate himself in such a way? Because he loves us. Because he loves his creation and he loves you and he loves me.

So he became like you and like me in every way except without sin so that he could save us. He went into Jerusalem, and the day that he went into Jerusalem is interesting. They're preparing for the Passover feast. Today, this day, is the day that the Passover lambs were selected for the slaughter. He came into Jerusalem on the very day when the priests were examining all the different lambs in the flock to determine which ones were without blemish, which ones were pure and able to be sacrificed in the temple and brought to the Passover meal. He came on that day having been selected to be the Passover lamb.

Now in the Old Testament, the Passover lambs' blood was placed on the doorposts and it saved the firstborn from death. But Jesus being the Passover lamb, the greater lamb of God, his blood is not poured over on our houses, but his blood is poured on us. In our baptisms, we receive the washing of regeneration through the

blood of Christ. Not only is the firstborn saved, but all of humanity is saved, all who called upon his name, all who believe.

See, God did not want us to believe because he was powerful and mighty and we were afraid of him, and we knew we'd better get in the right camp or else, he wanted us to believe in him because we love him, because he loves us. He desires that relationship with us, a relationship of love, of trust, of hope, of joy. He wanted us to be joyful in our salvation and our worship of God, not fearful of the almighty king who's going to punish us if we don't. This is why he came, for love. Love for you, and love for all of humanity.

He continues to show and demonstrate that love through his body and blood given to us every Sunday in the Lord's supper. We continue to receive his blood over and over again to remind us and to literally wash us free from our sin. In humble forms of bread and wine, humble forms of water, humble form of written word, God's almighty power is demonstrated, continues to be demonstrated. His humility goes forth into our lives that we might know that we are his children. In doing so, we might be saved and rejoice, rejoice in our salvation, because he was willing to humble himself because he loved us. May his grace and his mercy and his peace be and abide with you always now and forevermore unto life everlasting. Amen.