

I begin this morning with a word of encouragement as we face this pandemic – specifically on how to deal with anxiety and fear and uncertainty about the future.

Listen to the words of Joshua Chapter 1:9

⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

I think an obvious take away from this verse is that God is with us wherever we go.

I have heard that message many times over this past several weeks – along with encouragement of God’s sovereignty and comfort

And it is always good to be reminded – often

But this morning let’s consider the concept of courage.

Courage is a response to fear and anxiety.

Which implies that there is fear and anxiety in life - that fear and anxiety is normal.

Courage is our response to these emotions.

In fact – there would be no courage if there were not fear and anxiety

So – I encourage you not to feel bad if you have fear and anxiety

Health

Finances or job security

Or the future

Be courageous – stand up to fear in faith.

Trust God anyway.

Put one step in front of the other anyway

Read your Bible and pray anyway

That’s courage. And courage honors God.

As I lead us in our prayer time this morning, I'm going to open in prayer and then suggest areas of prayer and then give you time to pray together in your homes. So please take this time to pray – if you are alone or with your family, let's pray.

1. Prayers of praise that God is sovereign, God is good and God is just.

Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.

2. Prayers of confession - personal and on behalf of the Body of Christ for our sinfulness against God

I John 1:9

3. Prayers for God's grace for those who are suffering

He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.
³⁰Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
³¹but those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

4. Prayers for God's mercy to end this pandemic and for wisdom for our nation's leaders.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

This is the time when we normally receive our contributions. Let's be generous and joyful as we give this week.

Bring up our website for on-line giving

Text 715-600-5820 and type in "give"

Mail your check to our church office.

Music from our worship leaders.

King Jesus
Palm Sunday – Matt 21:1-11

Today is the first day of Easter week

May be hard to get into the spirit of Lent and Easter going through the upheaval in our country and community.

But this is a very special season – let's not miss out on the blessings of worship it affords.

This week we are going to follow the steps of Jesus, walking through the events of each day as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew.

Today we begin with what is known as the Triumphal Entry – Psalm Sunday.

Read Matt 21:1-11

This is Mathew's account of Jesus entering into Jerusalem following three years of teaching, healing, performing miracles, and training 12 disciples to carry his message to the world.

Yet, during these three years, it wasn't the time for everyone to understand exactly what he was doing.

When he performed a healing – he instructed the people not to tell anyone

He even declared that his time had not yet come

But now, his time had come.

Luke 9:53 tells us that it was time for him to accomplish his work

So he resolutely set out for Jerusalem

His final approach took him to a road down the Mount of Olives and a great crowd gathered to parade with him into the city.

This is when he made arrangements to ride on a colt.

Vs. 1-3 Matt alone tells us that there were two animals – a mother donkey and her colt.

Matthew makes an important point by referring to both animals, and it has to do with fulfillment of prophecy which states that Jesus rode a colt.

Read Zec 9:9

*Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

If Jesus were to ride into Jerusalem on a colt without the mother present, some could mistake the colt for an adult animal.

Having the mother donkey present, makes a clear distinction that Jesus was riding the colt.

And riding the colt connects this event to the prophecy.

Mark and Luke don't mention the mother donkey.

But they point out that Jesus rode the colt that "had never been ridden."

This was their way to distinguish the colt from its mother that had obviously been ridden all of her life.

So – the connection of this even with the prophecy of Zechariah is important because:

The prophecy presents Jesus as the King.

The Messiah – This truth becomes more and more obvious as we work through this text.

Notice how Jesus specifically instructed the disciples to bring this colt.

It was time for Jesus to make his identity known – he set up the entire declaration.

It was his idea and he was deliberate in it – just as he was deliberate in every other element of his final week .

Summary – Jesus orchestrated the Triumphal entry to demonstrate that he indeed is the King – the Messiah.

Vs. 8 - The crowd spread out their cloaks on the path for Jesus

Here is another indication that the Triumphal Entry presents Jesus as King.

2 Kings 9:13 – Jehu, son of Jehosaphat was anointed King by Elisha

Immediately the people took off their cloak and spread them out on the steps and proclaimed – Jehu Is King

Here - Placing their cloaks on the path for Jesus is a proclamation that he, like Jehu, is King

Vs. 9 – *Hosanna* – A cry of blessing and proclamation.

Coupled with *Son of David* connects Jesus to the promise of 2 Sam 7

A decedent of David would reign on God’s throne “forever”

Referring to Jesus and the decedent of David in the same phrase clearly identifies Jesus as the King.

Further – Jesus accepted this proclamation

Luke tells us that the Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke his disciples, because that is exactly how they understood this proclamation

But he replied, “If they don’t cry out, the stone will cry out.”

Everyone knew what Jesus was doing – even his enemies

Jesus was proclaiming himself King – Messiah.

When Matthew records *Hosanna in the highest*,¹ it reminds us of the acclaim from the Angels at the birth of Jesus.

He was proclaimed King then

He is proclaimed King now

After the procession and celebration, Mark tells us that it was late, so Jesus went into the Temple courts to look around and then went to Bethany to stay overnight with Lazarus, Mary and Martha

Let’s draw an application from this story – what is the point of this event orchestrated by Jesus?

It couldn’t be more obvious – Jesus wanted there to be no mistake – He is King Messiah and he wanted as many as possible to know about him.

But as Jesus approached Jerusalem proclaiming himself as Messiah, he rode a colt

An expression of peace.

Not a declaration that the King was coming on a conquest to capture the government and free the Jews from their Roman adversaries.

That's what everyone expected.

Vs. 10 - When Jesus entered the city gate, the people cried out – *Who is this?*

Not because they didn't know who he was. They all knew he was Jesus of Nazareth – Vs. 11

But even as everything pointed to him being King Messiah

Nothing was as they expected it.

Kings ride war horses

Kings conquer through war

Remember Zech 9:9? Notice the next verse

*I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
and the warhorses 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^[e] to the ends of the earth*

That's what kings do.

But Matt did not quote Vs. 10. Because Jesus was not that kind of king –
YET.

One day he will be that kind of king, **but now he is the humble king.**

For the next five days of his sojourn on earth **he is the suffering king**

My suggestion for a take home point – **Jesus is the King, but on his terms.**

When Jesus enters Jerusalem, he is up to something!

But nobody knew what it was.

Look at John 12:16

At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

Jesus was up to something, but they didn't realize it. They did on the next Sunday morning, but not then.

Jesus is the king, but on his terms.

This is a lesson that we need to learn as his followers.

I would never presume upon Jesus to give me perfect health and creature comforts just because he is the King and I am a King's kid!

Now – maybe he will.

I believe in protection and healing and I believe that God will provide for us. He is the King.

But not on our terms – on his terms.

His terms are humble and submissive prayer.

That's how we pray for the sick – anoint with oil and submissively and humbly pray

God has answered prayer in powerful ways – there are wonderful testimonies of people in our church

But God's blessing, healing and protection come not on our terms – but on God's terms

Jesus entered Jerusalem and intentionally made it clear – he is the King

But on his terms – not the terms of the people.

Sometimes his terms include suffering.

He works in our lives through difficulty so we can glorify him more and more by the way we respond.

Further, suffering is a way we identify with Jesus and experience the power of his grace.

Phil 3:10-11

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

2 Cor 12:9-12

⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong

I believe with all my heart that with this COVID-19, Jesus is up to something – just like he was up to something when he entered Jerusalem.

I’m not willing to venture a guess what it is – However, **I do know that he is the King, but on his terms.**

I also know that he is sovereign, and good and just – that he is a merciful God and that he hears us when we cry out to him in times like these.

So my application today is taken from **2 Chronicles 7:12-14** – (read)

This is God’s response to the prayer of Solomon when he dedicated the Temple.

God’ gives Solomon a promise.

I don’t want to squabble about whether the promise is meant only for the Jews of that particular time in history, or if it can be applied to God’s people over all of history.

These principles apply

First – In the midst of difficulty – God calls his people to prayer.

Humble prayer

Prayer seeking the face of God - more than reciting the Lord’s Prayer (although that is good)

Second – God calls his people to repentance - *turn from your sinful ways*

We can commiserate about the sinfulness of our culture

We can complain about signs of persecution

But here – God singles out his people and calls them to repentance.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem he was up to something – and the people didn't understand what it was.

Let's ask God – what are you up to in our lives. Where do we need to enter into repentance.

Third – the sincerity of the worship of God's people does influence God's mercy on the nation and world.

If God is lifted up – He will honor his reputation. (That's the theme for tomorrow)

And in response to the humble prayers of his people – God will show himself to be merciful.

I think Jesus is up to something with this pandemic.

And I think he is up to something in our church and in our individual lives.

Let's have confidence and rejoice that Jesus is the King. But remember - **Jesus is King, but on his terms.**

During this week I will lead us in daily devotional thoughts that develop this theme.

I'll reflect on the events of every day of this next week in Jesus' life.

Including a Maundy Thursday Service with Communion – so prepare your own elements.

Including a Good Friday service

Check out our web page and Facebook and follow along every day this week.

On April 7th, a number of Central Wisconsin Churches are asking our attenders to fast and pray.

Most of you received this notice last week. But if you didn't, it appears on our web page

On Tuesday, I challenge us all to fast one meal, two meals, some other form of sacrifice on that day – and then let's pray.

It won't be together on line

Just in your homes as God leads you.

Send me your specific prayer requests –

email at pastorscott@tlefc.org
text at 920-344-9805.

As we close our time together this morning, let's join in singing with our worship leaders.