

“Has Jesus Entered?”—Mark 11:7-10

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Has Jesus Entered?”, is Mark 11:7-10. *And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and He sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

All people have defining experiences in their lives, experiences so impacting that they change your perspective and/or the “direction” of your life. If you could recount those defining experiences in your life what might you share? Such experiences impact us both positively and negatively. These experiences affect our whole life in that we take them with us into every other area of our lives. The challenge is for us to cling to the positive experiences in the midst of so many negative experiences which the devil, the world and our own sinful natures use to “beat us up,” “beat us down” and cripple us emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Unfortunately, many people fail to recognize the impact of such experiences and their affect on how they perceive the entrance of Jesus into their lives. This could have been very true for those people on that the first Palm Sunday who were welcoming Jesus as He entered into their lives in Jerusalem. All of their “spiritual” experiences seemed to have climaxed for them into this one event, all based upon the written promises of the LORD in the Old Testament Scriptures.

One fantastic characteristic of Yahweh is that He is the great Promise Keeper. Therefore, He is constantly entering the lives of people and intervening with His presence! Throughout history God made the initiative to enter people’s lives based upon the promise He gave after the first terrible experience in the Garden of Eden—the fall into sin. This experience had such a negative impact that neither Adam nor Eve could fix it. Thus, God promised to fix it when He said to the devil in Genesis 3:15 → *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.* It is the promise of the Savior entering our lives to bring us into a perfect relationship with the LORD by destroying the devil’s power!

Yahweh made a triumphal entry into our lives on that first Christmas by taking on our human flesh to fulfill this promise. It was “triumphal” in the sense

that He would destroy the power of sin, death and the devil once and for all. However, this was a humbling act on Christ's part in that the devil would "bruise His heel"—cause Him to suffer in the process. Philippians 2:7-8 says *Jesus emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant by His birth. And being found in human form, **He humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Our text records the crowds shouting something when Jesus entered Jerusalem: *"Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"* (verses 9-10) *Hosanna* is a Hebrew petition meaning "save" which was also used as an exclamation of praise. Their words confessed Yahweh entering their lives in the Person of Jesus based upon His promises to King David in 2 Samuel 7:12-13 → *I will raise up your offspring . . . who shall come from your body . . . and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever.* All the hoopla was over this King entering their lives to accomplish their salvation!

However, what they would experience with Jesus' entrance and the events which would unfold over the next several days would both impact and challenge their faith immensely! This *coming kingdom of their father David* through Jesus' entrance into their lives appeared to slip through their hands as they watched Him be arrested, beaten and mistreated, crucified and buried,

**and that by their religious leaders who should have wanted the same kingdom to which they looked forward!** However, even though this entry into Jerusalem was followed by Jesus' death on the cross it was climaxed by His resurrection from the dead. **In other words, God wasn't finished yet!!**

God is still the great Promise Keeper Who desires to intervene into your daily life! The reason God intervenes in your life is because of His steadfast love and compassion. Like a wayward child, so you need to be brought back to your heavenly Father and **He has provided that way in the Person & Work of Jesus!** Thus, God makes His entry into our hearts with His Holy Spirit as we are connected to Christ's death and resurrection through His means of grace—the Gospel, Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Absolution.

Yet, it seems that there are many people who have experienced Jesus' entrance into their lives by the Holy Spirit working through the means of grace who live as if He existed only at some point of their life in the past. Such a perspective is revealed in statements like "I'm not a Christian anymore" or "I don't believe in God anymore." It is revealed in decisions and actions to stay away from "church" because "all church does is make me feel guilty"—when, in actuality, worship is all about being served the LORD's forgiveness of sins amidst the awareness of your sins to be strengthened for the experiences of daily living! Such a perspective is a deception of the devil, the world and your

own sinful nature to view Jesus' entrance into your life as simply a series of events or experiences in your "faith history" with no affect on your life today.

These entries of the Holy Spirit into your life are not simply experiences in your past, done at some point in time and then forgotten about until later when you need to justify your existence as a Christian. Whenever God's Word comes to us it doesn't just reveal our identity as guilt-ridden sinners but, more importantly, our identity as forgiven sinners through faith in the Person & Work of Jesus Christ!! The Holy Spirit moves us to love Him, worship Him, praise Him and thank Him as the promised Savior. Not as a circumstantial Savior from the "bad" experiences in life but the eternal Savior from the worst experience—eternal separation from God and suffering in hell.

Jesus wants to enter your heart everyday with His grace and forgiveness! Even as you are born again in baptism so you are renewed daily through His written Word which you have the privilege of reading everyday. 2 Corinthians 4:16 says: *We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.* Why? That written Word reveals that Jesus has entered your life, lived in perfect obedience to God's Law **for you**, died as the perfect sacrifice **for your sins** and rose from the dead to **give you** eternal life!

The purpose for gathering here in this place is to be renewed together as

we distribute and receive Christ's forgiveness to one another through the Absolution, the preaching of the Gospel and the Lord's Supper. You are renewed by the Holy Spirit not simply to walk away from this divine service with another experience where you had the privilege of seeing Jesus enter your midst while you praised Him as your Savior. You are renewed to go into the experiences of your life to reflect to Whom you belong—Jesus! You are renewed so that when you see Jesus on the cross you trust in His perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness of your sins! You are renewed so that when you encounter the empty tomb you will rejoice in the eternal life which is yours because of Jesus! Palm Sunday anticipates the fulfillment your salvation in Jesus' death and resurrection!

It was a little over three months ago when we celebrated the incarnation—God taking on human flesh through the entrance of Jesus into our history and lives by His birth. In our worship experiences back then we sang: "Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin; Make straight the way for God within, And let us all our hearts prepare For Christ to come and enter there." (LSB 344:2) We prayed: "O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!" May these words be our prayer everyday. Amen.