

Sermon for April 13, 2025 – Palm Sunday

Psalm 24 (EHV)

Theme: Behold Your

- 1) God,
- 2) Saviour,
- 3) and King

By David. A psalm. ¹ The earth is the LORD's and everything that fills it, the world and all who live in it, ² because he founded it on the seas, and he established it on the rivers. ³ Who may go up to the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, whose soul is not set on what is false, who does not swear deceitfully. ⁵ He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God who saves him. ⁶ Such are the people of Jacob who look for the LORD, who seek your face. Interlude ⁷ Lift up your heads, you gates. Lift yourselves up, you ancient doors, and the King of Glory will come in. ⁸ Who is this King of Glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. ⁹ Lift up your heads, you gates. Lift up, you ancient doors, and the King of Glory will come in. ¹⁰ Who is he, this King of Glory? The LORD of Armies—he is the King of Glory. Interlude

When I was 15 years old, a friend asked me to join him at a political rally to see Helmut Kohl. Since I had just moved to Germany from Canada a few days earlier, I had no idea who that man was and why I should see him. Nevertheless, I went along with my friend.

We saw a lot of people carrying CDU signs and cheering when he spoke. My German friend told me that he was the Chancellor of Germany and very influential in reunifying his country. Had my friend not explained to me who Helmut Kohl was and what he accomplished, I probably would not have been too excited to see him.

Today, we remember Jesus entering Jerusalem to the shouts and praises of His people. But who is He that we should be excited to remember that event? As Christians, we know the answer. Sadly, many in our communities either don't know Him who He is or understand why He is important. They need someone to tell them.

My friend was excited to tell me about Helmut Kohl because of the profound impact that man had on his nation. May the LORD grant us even greater excitement to share the message of Jesus with our families, friends, and neighbours. Therefore, with the 24th Psalm as our guide, let us review and celebrate the person and work of Jesus, under the theme: **Behold your God, Saviour, and King.**

Part One: Behold your God.

When my friend first explained that Helmut Kohl was the chancellor of Germany, I still didn't fully comprehend his significance. I didn't understand what a chancellor was, so he had to explain that a German chancellor is equivalent to a prime minister.

When we clarify the importance of Palm Sunday to others, we not only need to explain that the Jesus we commemorate riding into Jerusalem is God but also what that means. Why? Because most people have a misconception of what God is. For instance, some believe that a "god" is merely a being with superhuman abilities or strength, while others perceive "gods" as the forces of nature. Many people treat the concept of having a god as an insurance policy, someone they turn to only in emergencies.

Sadly, the human mind is incapable of fully comprehending the nature of God. Only the LORD can reveal what it means and explain His significance to us, which He does through the Bible.

Our Psalm begins: ¹ *The earth is the LORD's and everything that fills it, the world and all who live in it,* ² *because he founded it on the seas, and he established it on the rivers.*

Our God is not only powerful; He is all-powerful: an observable fact when you look at His creation. For example, consider the raw power contained within our sun. Did you know that every second, the sun releases the equivalent energy of 1.83 billion of the most powerful thermonuclear bombs ever built! Now consider that there are hundreds of billions of stars like our sun throughout our galaxy, and hundreds of billions of galaxies throughout our universe. Our God created all this raw power by simply saying, *"Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to divide the day from the night."*ⁱ

God not only created the universe, He also uniquely made each one of us, as King David once wrote: *"For you created my inner organs. You wove me together in my mother's womb."*ⁱⁱ Yes, Jesus himself was involved in weaving our DNA chromosomes together so that we could be exactly who we are. We are His creation and not a result of mere chance. We belong to Him.

Our God is so large that He fills everythingⁱⁱⁱ and yet He still tends to every minute detail of his creation. He directs every subatomic particle in the universe for the glory of His name – even counting and caring for every hair on your head.^{iv} He knows your thoughts before you think them.^v That is the Almighty God we worship. He always existed and is the source of all that exists. That is why we Christians are excited to celebrate Jesus riding into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to be our Saviour: because *He* (that man on the donkey) *is the true God!*^{vi}

Let me ask you a question: how often do you think of Jesus as **all** mighty? I mean, we probably often imagine him as powerful but not necessarily all-powerful; or as knowing, but not necessarily all-knowing. When you consider exactly who Jesus is - our all-powerful, all-knowing, present everywhere eternal God – don't you have to hang your head in shame for not even coming close to giving him the love and respect He deserves?

King Solomon was right when he wrote: *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*^{vii} But we often act as fools, living as if He

cannot see us or know what's going on in our lives. We often treat Jesus like an insurance policy: someone we turn to when in trouble but whom we ignore when things are going well.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us repent of all these things and worship Jesus for who He truly is: our Almighty God who is so involved in every detail of our lives that He directs every particle in the infinite universe for our benefit. Offer Jesus proper respect, love, and honour – acknowledging Him as the LORD God almighty who loved you so much that He willingly offered himself up on the cross to save you from your sins.

Part Two: Behold your Saviour

Our Psalm continues: ³ *Who may go up to the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?* ⁴ *He who has clean hands and a pure heart, whose soul is not set on what is false, who does not swear deceitfully.* ⁵ *He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God who saves him.* ⁶ *Such are the people of Jacob who look for the LORD, who seek your face.*

The LORD is so utterly holy that His presence cannot tolerate even the slightest sin. Who, then, can approach God? Only he who has never sinned in deed, word, or thought. But the Bible also says that, except for Jesus, no one is without sin. How, then, can we be saved? Only by the mercy of our God!

Even though every inclination of [the human] heart is evil from childhood,^{viii} the LORD pitied us so much that He took it upon himself to save us from the eternal death we deserve because of our sins. How? By taking on human flesh in the womb of the virgin Mary so that He could be human like us.

As Jesus walked this earth, He was tempted in every way, just as we are, but remained without sin.^{ix} He kept His Father's law so perfectly that He earned the right to stand in God's presence forever.

Instead of keeping His righteousness for himself, He exchanged it for the sin of every human that has or ever will live on this earth.^x Why? To pay for our sins so that we could live with Him forever in paradise.

When God the Father saw Jesus on the cross, He saw our sins and struck Jesus with His righteous anger over them. Our record of sins died with Jesus. His resurrection proves it. Therefore, God forgives everyone who looks to Jesus in repentance and faith. He cleanses their hands, hearts, and souls – blessing them with salvation.

Through faith in Jesus, we become the person King David describes in our sermon text: completely righteous and holy. Why? Because whenever God looks at the believer, He sees Jesus, as the Bible says: *you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Indeed, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.*^{xi}

Here, then, is yet another truth to tell others about the Jesus we worship on Palm Sunday: He was riding into Jerusalem to save us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. Because of His life, death and resurrection on our behalf, God invites us to stand before Him in the peace of His forgiveness - regardless of how stained with sin we once were. We are not that person anymore. Through faith, God clothes us with Christ's righteousness so we can live forever with Him in paradise.

Part Three: Behold your King.

Now that we know exactly who Jesus is and what He has done, what shall we do with this knowledge? The last part of our Psalm offers an excellent suggestion:

⁷ Lift up your heads, you gates. Lift yourselves up, you ancient doors, and the King of Glory will come in. ⁸ Who is this King of Glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. ⁹ Lift up your heads, you gates. Lift up, you ancient doors, and the King of Glory will come in. ¹⁰ Who is he, this King of Glory? The LORD of Armies—he is the King of Glory.

Picture the scene: a King returns to his castle as heralds call to the gatekeepers to let him in. Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem certainly seems to fulfill these words of Scripture. However, there is another way these words are fulfilled—even today.

The Bible calls believers the temple of the Holy Spirit. The gate that the Lord desires to enter through is our hearts. He wants to rule in us by His grace so that we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life now on earth and forever in heaven.^{xii}

Therefore, Jesus has His heralds - faithful pastors, family members, and Christian friends – call out to us with the good news of who He is and what He has done to save us. And, by the power of His Word, He changes us - making our unwilling hearts willing to receive Him as King through repentance and faith.

Not only that, but He makes us heralds of His Gospel as well – people who call out to their family, friends, and neighbours: “Open your hearts to the LORD! Repent of your sins and let the King of Glory in! Who is the King of Glory? You ask. Jesus is He: the almighty LORD who has conquered sin, death, and the power of the devil to save us all from the hell we deserve because of our sins.”

Just as my 15-year-old German friend invited me to see a great man, invite your unchurched family and friends to meet Jesus with you this Easter so that they might know who He is and what He has done to save them. Yes, point them all to Jesus knowing that the Holy Spirit will work through your witness to invite them to know and worship Jesus as their God, Saviour, and King. Amen.

ⁱ Genesis 1:14 EHV

ⁱⁱ Psalm 139:13 EHV

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Psalm 139:7-12

^{iv} Cf. Matthew 10:30

^v Cf. Psalm 139:1-6

^{vi} 1 John 5:20c EHV

^{vii} Proverbs 9:10, EHV

^{viii} Genesis 8:21 NIV84

^{ix} Cf. Hebrews 4:15

^x Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21

^{xi} Galatians 3:26-27 EHV

^{xii} Cf. Luther's explanation of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer in the Small Catechism.