

Sermon for March 29, 2026 – Palm Sunday

Zechariah 9:9,10 EHV

Theme: **See, your King comes to you!**

- 1) He is a different kind of King.
- 2) He established a different kind of Kingdom.

⁹Rejoice greatly, Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your King is coming to you. He is righteous and brings salvation. He is humble and is riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The battle bow will be taken away, and he will proclaim peace to the nations. His kingdom will extend from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth.

What do political rallies, military parades, and royal coronations all have in common with major sporting events? They all use some sort of pre-event pageantry to evoke excitement, pride, and hope as they focus attention on the person being announced.

Our human nature loves big entrances. Why? Because, deep down, we long for a hero to come in and fix what's wrong - or at least distract us from it. We want someone or something we can put our hope in.

Palm Sunday is like that kind of pre-battle pageantry that ancient Kings had before going off to war - with one huge difference: Jesus doesn't enter Jerusalem with pompous flair, but in gentle humility. Why? Because His kingdom is not about terrifying people into submission, but forgiving their sins and reconciling them to God.

Let us consider these things under the theme: **See, your King comes to you!** 1) He is a different kind of King. 2) He established a different kind of Kingdom.

Part One: He is a different kind of King

About 400 years before Jesus was born, the LORD gave the prophet Zechariah visions about the coming Messiah. God wanted His people to recognize their divine King when He came, so they could place their hope in Him.

Our sermon is one of these divine insights. God encourages His people by saying:

⁹Rejoice greatly, Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your King is coming to you. He is righteous and brings salvation. He is humble and is riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

“Rejoice... Shout!” The LORD tells His people. Why? “Your king is coming to you.” The time has come for our Provider, Protector and Saviour to step onto the field of battle to defeat our greatest enemies.

But notice how unique He is. He does not come with a glittering army, chariots, or war horses. He does not come clothed in armour or earthly glory. Instead, he comes in humility... *riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Why this display of deliberate gentleness? Because that’s the kind of King God the Father promised His Son would be, as He prophesied through Isaiah:

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. I am placing my Spirit on him. He will announce a just verdict for the nations. ²He will not cry out. He will not raise his voice. He will not make his voice heard in the street. ³A bent reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not snuff out.ⁱ

Jesus comes gently because He comes to save, not to destroy. He wants people to see a Friendⁱⁱ and Saviour in Him, not run away in terror. He wants broken and bruised people to come to Him for help – not to hide from Him as if He were an enemy.

At the same time, don’t let His gentleness fool you. This humble King is no pushover. Behind the humility is the almighty Son of God. This King has come to conquer enemies far more terrifying than any army. He came to defeat sin, death, and the devil – not through force of arms, but through His perfect obedience and willing sacrifice.

In human terms, Jesus’ Palm Sunday parade was a peculiar sight indeed. Imagine King Charles riding in a parade with no pomp or military escort, but driving a small, compact car. How much more curious that the heir of heaven itself would ride a borrowed colt of a donkey into Jerusalem!

Jesus seems weak, escorted only by his unarmed disciples. Soon He will be arrested, beaten, and crucified. But God wants us to understand: Jesus is still your divine King, through whom victory is assured.

How so? Because, as Zechariah states, *He is righteous and brings salvation.*

Yes, our king is righteous – completely without sin. Every thought, word, and deed of His life is in perfect harmony with His Father’s will. Because He is sinless, the devil has no claim on Him, no power to condemn Him.

He also “brings salvation” – a phrase that can also be translated: “*having been delivered.*” God the Father guarded and preserved His Son’s life all the way to this moment. Think of all the times Jesus’ enemies tried to arrest and kill Him before now, but couldn’t because “His time had not yet come.”ⁱⁱⁱ God would allow nothing to jeopardize our salvation. He protected Jesus so He could go to the cross and finish His work of saving us.

So rejoice! See, your King comes to you. He does not depend on you to secure His kingdom for Him as an earthly King would. No, He comes righteous and protected by God. Just as He overcame every temptation the devil threw at him in life, so He would crush Satan's head through His cross, as the devil would strike His heel.^{iv}

Yes, Jesus certainly is a different kind of King: humble instead of proud, seeking the welfare of others ahead of His own.

But is that the kind of King you want?

Sadly, our sinful natures rebel against Him. We don't naturally want a righteous king who corrects our wrongs; we want one who will make our lives easier without calling us to repent. Our corrupt hearts want a king who will tell us what we want to hear, who will affirm our sinful plans and priorities instead of forgiving them. In fact, our sinful natures would rather rule ourselves instead of bowing before Christ.

Despite all that, Jesus still comes to you - not in burning wrath to crush you for your sins, but in humility to save you from them. He, the one who has been delivered, comes so He can deliver you from the corruption of your sinful nature. He, the righteous one, comes to create a new heart within you to receive His gift of righteousness through repentance and faith.

Yes, just as Jesus came to the people of Jerusalem, He also comes to you: humble and bringing salvation. He comes not to be the king your wicked heart desires, but to conquer and rule over your heart with His forgiving love. And because Jesus is a different kind of King, He uses different means to establish His rule over us.

Part Two: He established a different kind of Kingdom.

Earthly kings establish their kingdoms through military might. They gather armies, go out to war, kill, and conquer.

Jesus established His kingdom differently - not by killing others, but by allowing Himself to be killed – and then rise again.

The LORD describes His kingdom through Zechariah:

¹⁰I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The battle bow will be taken away, and he will proclaim peace to the nations. His kingdom will extend from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth.

“Ephraim” stands for the northern tribes of Israel; “Jerusalem” for Judah in the south. After Solomon, the kingdom split in two. Assyria scattered the north; Babylon exiled Judah. In Zechariah's day, only a small remnant was back in the land - weak, surrounded by enemies, and struggling to rebuild.

But God points them beyond what they could see physically. He promises a King who will unite His people and bring true peace. The unification that the LORD himself would accomplish through this King would be far more than just bringing scattered Israelites back to Palestine.

The Israel described here is a picture of all believers, scattered among every nation on earth. The Messiah's kingdom would not just be a strip of land on a map. Jesus' kingdom is spiritual: His saving rule in the hearts of those who trust in Him from every people, language, and culture. It truly reaches "to the ends of the earth."

Therefore, our Saviour's kingdom is not marked by its weapons of war – chariots, war horses, and battle bows – but by His rule of peace. On the night before He died, Jesus told His disciples:

²⁷“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid.”^v

The peace Christ established is not first of all a feeling of calm or the end of an earthly conflict. It is something far deeper: peace with God.

Every sin sets us against God. When we ignore His commands or excuse our selfishness, we are saying to God, “I know better than you.” That is rebellion and makes us His enemies – enemies who deserve His just wrath and punishment.

But God did not want us lost to hell as His enemies. Therefore, He anointed Jesus to be a different kind of King – one who would establish peace not by punishing us, but by being punished for us.

On the cross, Jesus suffered the wrath we deserved. He carried every one of our sins to the cross to be nailed there with Himself.^{vi} In doing so, He reconciled us to God – removing the barrier that separated us from Him. Through Jesus, God no longer sees you as an enemy, but as a dear child. He is at peace with you.

And how does He proclaim this peace to you? He does it through His Gospel. Every time you hear the good news preached – “Christ died for your sins and rose again” – your King announces His peace treaty with you.

Jesus made you a citizen of His Kingdom through the sacrament of Holy Baptism, where He put His name on you and claimed you as His own. To assure you of your peace with God, He comes to you every time you partake of the Lord's Supper, where He gives you His true body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine as a tangible seal of your forgiveness and peace with God.

Note that the peace God established with us does not just remain inside us. No, like yeast working through a batch of dough,^{vii} it spreads - moving us to share His peace with each other. Former enemies become brothers as all the earthly barriers that cause division get torn down in Him.

In Christ's kingdom, people with different backgrounds, personalities, and political beliefs kneel side by side at the same altar, receiving the same body and blood from the same Saviour that unites them in His kingdom. In Christ's kingdom, long-held prejudices and grudges must give way to

forgiveness. Former rivals and opponents, by God's grace, learn to serve one another prayerfully out of reverence for Christ.

Yes, Christ's kingdom is unlike any other. It seems small, yet is worldwide. It appears weak, but is all-powerful. What looked like a defeat on Good Friday was, in fact, our King's victory – one He announced on Easter morning by rising from the dead!

Brothers and sisters in Christ, Palm Sunday was our Saviour's pre-battle pageantry – meant to draw our attention to who He is and what He was about to accomplish, so we might put our hope in Him.

Rejoice, therefore, as you begin your Holy Week of remembrance. Cheer your King on in your heart as you see Him battle sin, death, and the devil for you. When you see him mocked, know that he endures that shame in your place. When you see him nailed to the cross, know that he was carrying your guilt. When you hear Him cry, "It is finished," know that your debt to God is fully paid.

And when you come to hear His Word in worship and to receive His body and blood at His table in Holy Communion, know that the same gentle King who came to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday still meets with you now – offering you His gifts of righteousness, peace, and salvation.

Yes, dear brothers and sisters, rejoice! See, your King comes to you. He is a different kind of King - gentle, humble, righteous, and bringing salvation. He has established a different kind of Kingdom - a spiritual and worldwide rule, full of forgiveness, peace, and life.

Joyfully cling to Him in repentance and faith, for He will keep His promise to come again at the end of time – not humbly on a donkey, but with the full glory and might of His holy angels to welcome us home to Himself in heaven. Amen.

ⁱ Isaiah 42:1-3 EHV

ⁱⁱ Cf. John 15:13ff

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Luke 4:29-30, John 7:30, 8:20

^{iv} Cf. Genesis 3:15

^v John 14:27 EHV

^{vi} Cf. Colossians 2:14

^{vii} Cf. Matthew 13:33