

“Have you lost your mind?” Luke 19:28-40

“And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let me first ask you: “Have you lost your mind?” Or more precisely: “Have you already lost your mind?” “What do you mean, pastor, what sort of questions are those?” Let’s see!

What Sunday is today? That’s right, it is Palm Sunday. And what an event do we remember on Palm Sunday? The so-called triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The triumphal entry...

As we remember this event, I invite you to reflect on the following: “What is our fallen human mind like?” “What is the mind of Christ like?” And most importantly: “How can we have the mind of Christ?”

Now first – *what is our fallen human mind like?* When we reflect on what happened on that Palm Sunday, we can see so vividly what our human mind is like. How can we see it? Remember, what happened?

As Jesus was approaching Jerusalem, people begin to “... **spread their cloaks on the road. As He was drawing near ... the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”**”

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Why did they rejoice and why did they praise God? What was the reason? Here it is – “**for all the mighty works that they had seen.**” That’s it. For all the mighty works that they had seen. And those works were mighty, indeed.

Healing all the sick who were brought to Jesus. Casting out and rebuking demons. Feeding the thousands. Remember, that was when the crowds already wanted to make Jesus a king, by force, He had to flee.

Then rebuking the storm and just a few days before the events of that Palm Sunday, Jesus raised from the dead His dear friend Lazarus, who had been dead for four days. "Blessed is the King who comes!" Who have done such mighty works!

What sort of kings do we want? What kind of kings, or rulers, or leaders do we like? We just had our SA state elections, we should know. That's right, those who will deliver what we want, what we hope for, what we desire in our hearts.

On that Palm Sunday, those crowds greeted one such candidate. He had a very good track record. There was a joyful hope that He will help with political problems and may even liberate them from their Roman oppressors, that He may help with social issues, food supply and health care would be certainly dealt with, and even natural disasters may be somewhat under control.

They wanted a king who would help them to make life better – in this world. And in fact, that is what people usually expect not only from their kings but also from their gods. That they will grant us what we want, that they will make our lives better and more enjoyable, that they will solve our painful problems – in this world.

This is one of the reasons why there was this rejoicing and praising on that Palm Sunday. But there was more. Now, imagine yourselves in the shoes of Jesus' disciples. It was their Teacher, their Master, who received all this welcome and honour and glory, it was Him who was recognized by everyone.

It was their Rabbi who was adored and praised, it was His hour of fame. And it was their hour of fame as well. At that moment Jesus seemed so powerful, so influential that no one could stop Him.

It seemed that all the world had gone after Him. How good is that?! What would you give to experience that Jesus' is similarly welcomed and embraced today, or that we as His disciples are similarly welcomed and embraced today?

That we could be famous and praised by the world, influential and powerful, accepted and recognized by the world. Wouldn't that be great?! This is one of our ongoing temptations. For here we have the recipe for success.

Give, or at least promise people such God, such Jesus, who will do whatever they want, who will help them, who will satisfy their longings and needs, real and imaginary, and ... you too may have all that success and praise.

People will like you, and they will accept you and praise you and listen to you. How often we are tempted this way... to give people what they want or demand so that in exchange we can receive what we long for?

And on one level caring for the needs of this life is quite okay. For Jesus Himself did care for those who came to Him. He did heal and He did feed them, and He did help them in many ways. And we as His disciples also are to serve and to help our neighbours in all their bodily needs. That is all good and much needed, and we should do our best. No question about that.

But then what is wrong with this? What was wrong with how people rejoiced on that Palm Sunday? They had this problem, and we have it as well. It has to do with our minds. They are centred on this world, on this life, on us, on me. We mostly hope for good things in this life for ourselves. In this world!

We struggle to even comprehend the grandeur of the Biblical message. We struggle to understand what sort of king this Jesus is, and what exactly He is bringing to us. Because who He is and what He does and what He has prepared for us it just too big, too incredibly and unbelievably wonderful.

He is not mere one more king among others, and His Kingdom is not of this world. He is not here to compete with the mighty of this world. To contend that He is more powerful than they are, that He can deliver better life in this world, that He is more attractive and influential and deserving more praise and honour.

No! He is infinitely more powerful than anyone else, and He can deliver not only better life in this world, but He is going to deliver – a better world, a New Creation, New Heavens and New Earth for His chosen people to dwell in. With Him.

He is not competing in glory and splendour with the mighty of this world. He has a very different mindset. *The mind of Christ. Our second questions, remember?* He, the same One who was there in the beginning, who holds together everything that there is, He left His divine glory and humbled Himself, He became like one of us.

Palm Sunday may seem triumphant to our minds. Good Friday and Easter Sunday is where Jesus is glorified and where we can witness the triumph according to the mind of Christ. He, the holy and eternal One, He **“emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant... and being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”**

How repulsive, how foolish the cross seems to us! No triumph, no glory, no beauty, no gain! But that is where the greatest victory was won. That is where the beginning of God's New Creation took place. Where our mightiest enemies, against whom we are totally helpless – sin and death and devil – were defeated. Jesus did it for you. For each one of you! On the cross.

The mind of Christ... For Him the self-sacrificial death for us is the greatest victory. To suffer shame for the sake of others – even His enemies, and we all used to belong to that category – that is His glory. Total obedience to His Father's will, obedience to the point of death – that is His freedom, and all of this that seems so unnatural and foolish to our human minds, for Him is God's wisdom.

Even today He continues to come to us, to build His Kingdom and to reign in the same strange way – without visible glory and splendour, without fame and worldly power. He comes to us so gently – with a breath of air, speaking to us, in His Word, in this ancient Book, the Bible.

He comes and brings forth His Kingdom by speaking to us through His servants, through imperfect, sinful and unworthy people to whom He has graciously entrusted His life-giving message. He does it right now and right here.

He comes to us and delivers His promises – the gift of His Spirit, the forgiveness of all our sins and adoption in God’s family – in the water of Holy Baptism; the water which we simply pour from our kitchen tap.

He comes to us in those small pieces of bread and few drops of wine, in His Holy Meal. The Lord’s Supper. The most ordinary things. Thus, comes to us and reigns among us the most extra-ordinary God whom we are privilege to call our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. He comes unceasingly toiling to bring you and to keep you in His Kingdom. Even when we ignore Him and push Him away.

Now our third topic. Paul writes: **“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”** What does this mean? First, to know who your King and your Lord is, and to know Him as your Lord. Yes, as your Lord! To know that you are His own. To know and rejoice that everything that He did, He did it for you.

Also, to know what the main mission that He has entrusted to us is. To speak the words of eternal life to all people in our lives. For He wants everyone to know the truth and to be saved. Moreover, it also means, as Paul wrote to Philippians:

“To stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel, not being frightened in anything by our opponents... having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Doing nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility counting others more significant than ourselves.”

As Christ did for us. But how can we do that? How can we have this mind of Christ? It is not natural for us. There are those other things that we desire more, care for more. Triumph, fame, recognition, influence, and countless other things of this world. The truth is that on our own we can’t have the mind of Christ.

We don’t have such resources in us. And... we don’t need them. For we have our King, our Lord, Jesus Christ. His reign has begun, His life-changing message has gone to the farthest corners of the earth, His voice has reached you.

He has considered you as more significant. The Triune God has embraced you and made home with you – this is why you are here; and the Holy Spirit has created a new heart in you and as we listen to our Lord, He continues to shape you to be more and more like Jesus. He does it right now.

So, have you already lost your old and selfish mind? Have you already embraced the mind of Christ? Yes and no! He certainly has begun His work with us, and the fruits of His efforts are seen already now – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and so on, even if they are not ripe yet.

But when the day comes, when He is finished with us, we will have the mind of Christ. You will be fully restored, no selfish bone in our new and resurrected bodies, rejoicing and praising Jesus Christ, the Lamb who was slain, together with multitudes of God’s saints from all nations and languages and tribes.

That will be our triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Into heavenly Jerusalem. It can’t come soon enough. Blessed Palm Sunday, Brothers and Sisters! Amen.