

**MINNESOTA VALLEY FREE LUTHERAN CHURCH SERVICE
SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2020; PALM SUNDAY/HOLY COMMUNION
PASTOR TOM OLSON**

*Please prepare for this service by having bread and wine/or grape juice ready at home
or in your car at drive in service.*

OPENING PRAYER: O Lord, our Maker, Redeemer, and Comforter, we are assembled in Your presence to hear your Holy Word. We pray that You will open our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that through the preaching of Your Word we may be taught to repent of our sins, to believe on Jesus in life and in death, and to grow day by day in grace and holiness. Hear us for Christ's sake. Amen.

READ OPENING HYMN, "All Glory, Laud and Honor" by Theodulph of Orleans (760-821)

1.All glory, laud, and honor
To thee, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring.
Thou art the King of Israel,
Thou David's royal Son,
Who in the Lord's name comest,
The King and Blessed One.

2.The company of angels
Are praising thee on high,
And mortal men and all things
Created make reply.
The people of the Hebrews
With palms before thee went;
Our praise and love and anthems
Before thee we present.

3.To thee, before thy passion,
They sang their hymns of praise;
To thee, now high exalted,
Our melody we raise.
Thou didst accept their praises;
Accept the love we bring,
Who in all good delightest,
Thou good and gracious King.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: JESUS WEPT...do you ever cry when you are sad? ...you bump your head, you don't feel well... Jesus cried when his friend Lazarus, who lived near the Mt. of Olives, died. Jesus cried when he rode down that mountain into Jerusalem and saw that they didn't believe in him. That is because Jesus really cares about us and wants us to trust him for forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus wants us to trust that he will take care of us. When we take communion and look at that bread and that grape juice, Jesus is saying to us, I am here, I have not forgotten about you, I gave my life for you, I am coming back again to take you home. Until I come back, I want you to know that I feel your pain and it makes me sad. But you can be sure that everything is going to turn out very well. Just trust me. Amen

PRAYER AND SERMON:



THE KING COMES THROUGH THE GATE
John 12:12-19; Pastor Tom Olson; April 5, 2020

John 12:12-19 The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Blessed is the King of Israel!"

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written,

*15 "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey's colt."*

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 they had done these things to him.

17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

I. THE GATE TO THE CROSS

I recently saw a photo of the eastern gate of Jerusalem. It is all cemented shut and a cemetery is right in front of it. Why? It is man's effort to attempt to keep Jesus from coming back and riding through that gate as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This is the gate that faces the Mt. of Olives. It is the gate that Jesus rode through on the donkey as he entered Jerusalem and the people shouted "Lord Save Us." He was riding to the cross!

II. THE GATE TO HEAVEN

It is the gate that Jesus would have walked out of after He rose from the dead and went to the Mt. of Olives to ascend into heaven. When Jesus ascended into heaven in Acts 1 the disciples watched a cloud take him away from their sight. Then an angel spoke to them *Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you*

stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

III. THE GATE TO ETERNITY

It is the gate to the coming kingdom. When Jesus comes back some day, he will descend to the Mt. of Olives just like he left. ***Zechariah 14:4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.*** This will provide a way for God's people who are trapped in Jerusalem by the enemies of God to escape. I can just see Jesus, perhaps on a white horse, riding into Jerusalem through that eastern gate broken open by the mighty earthquake and entering, as he did on Palm Sunday...but not as the Lamb of God heading to die on the cross to atone for the sins of the world. This time entering as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords...taking his seat upon the throne of David to judge the nations of the world.

IV. THE GATE TO SALVATION

TERRIFIED: Before I found peace with God through Jesus Christ the thought of judgement day terrified me. I knew I was a sinner and would get thrown into hell. I was trying so hard to be good enough to go to heaven but I had no peace. But all that changed when I saw him dying on the cross for me, for my sin. ***Wounded for me, wounded for me; There on the cross, He was wounded for me; Gone my transgressions, and now I am free; All because Jesus was wounded for me.***

CROSS: When Jesus came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday the people wanted a savior from Roman rule and earthly problems. But that is not what they needed. They really needed a Savior from sin. Jesus had every right to go to the temple and declare Himself to be the eternal King and rule the nation. But that would not have solved the problem of sin and death. So, he laid aside His heavenly crown and traded it for the crown of thorns. He laid aside His heavenly scepter and traded it for a cross and nails. He laid aside His glorious royal robe and traded it for nakedness and shame. He laid aside His holiness and traded it for our sin. He laid aside his life and traded it for the death we deserved. *"When I was sinking down, Christ laid aside His crown, for my soul."*

V. THE GATE TO THE RETURN OF CHRIST

UNPRECEDENTED: For two thousand years we have sang the ancient songs and re-enacted the procession of Christ into Jerusalem, waving palm branches and shouting Hosanna. But this year, for the first time in two thousand years, the churches all around the world are empty on Palm Sunday. The organs and trumpets are silent. There are no thunderous shouts of Hosanna. It is almost like the eerie calm before the storm. I drive by empty schools, empty stores, empty malls, silent bulldozers, half-built houses at a standstill. What an eerie feeling. It reminds me of a song from the 1970's about that same eastern gate we talked about. That song goes like this:

*The marketplace is empty
No more traffic in the streets
All the builders' tools are silent
No more time to harvest wheat
Busy housewives cease their labors
In the courtroom no debate
Work on earth is all suspended
As the King comes thro' THE GATE!*

*Happy faces line the hallways
Those whose lives have been redeemed
Broken homes that He has mended
Those from prison He has freed
Little children and the aged
Hand in hand stand all aglow
Who were crippled, broken, ruined
Clad in garments white as snow*

*I can hear the chariots rumble
I can see the marching throng
The flurry of God's trumpets
Spells the end of sin and wrong
Regal robes are now unfolding
Heaven's grandstand's all in place
Heaven's choir now assembled
Start to sing "Amazing Grace"*

*O the King is coming
The King is coming
I just heard the trumpets sounding
And now His face I see*

*O the King is coming
The King is coming
Praise God, He's coming for me*

ANTICIPATION: Don't feel bad about the fact that we can't celebrate Palm Sunday this year like we normally do. Because one of these days Jesus is coming back and we will be able to celebrate the fulfillment of Palm Sunday together as we join him in the grand procession through that eastern gate for His official coronation as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. My heart yearns for that day.

FRIGHTENED: But if some of you listening, are like I was before I got saved, the thought scares you. Then you must focus on the first Palm Sunday when Jesus rode humbly into Jerusalem on the donkey to join the procession of the Passover Lamb and fulfill all righteousness and go to the cross to die for our sins. Follow Him to the cross. Follow Him to the cross. See his hands and feet nailed to that cross. See his innocent blood dripping on the sin cursed ground as an atoning sacrifice. Then come back next Sunday to see what happened three days after His death.

INVITATION: Won't you invite Jesus into your heart today? I am so glad I did some 45 years ago. I now have no fear of His return and I look forward to what is next because I know Jesus is my Savior. Won't you pray with me?

PRAYER: Dear Father in Heaven, Thank you for sending Your only Son to die on the cross for my sins. I invite Jesus into my heart to forgive me of my sin and save my soul. Thank you for making me your child. Please use me to tell others the good news of Jesus. In His Name I pray. Amen

*At this time I encourage you to stop the video and get some bread and wine or grape juice for communion.
If you don't have any just look upon the ones I show you and partake in your heart and spirit.*

COMMUNION LITURGY

CONFESSION OF SINS “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. ¹²Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Amen”

DECLARATION OF GRACE: “The blood of Jesus, God’s Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Amen

CONFESSION OF FAITH: *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen*

THE LORD’S PRAYER: *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

WORDS OF INSTITUTION: ***Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread. And when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying, “Take and eat, this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, when He had eaten, He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying, “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you, and for many, for the forgiveness of sins; this do, as often as you drink of it, in remembrance of Me.”***

RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION AT HOME OR IN CAR: “The body of Christ given for you. The blood of Christ shed for you.”

DISMISSAL: Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! Now may the holy body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in the true faith unto everlasting life. Peace be with you. Amen

POST COMMUNION PRAYER: “Thank you Lord for blessing us with these gracious gifts. Strengthen us through them to love you with our whole hearts and love our neighbor as ourselves and to have complete confidence in the shed blood of Jesus to take away all our sins. Please help our leaders and all who are serving in the fight against the terrible Corona virus. We pray for your healing presence with the sick. Please use this crisis to bring many to faith in your Son. We pray in the mighty Name of Jesus. Amen”

BENEDICTION: The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace. Amen

DOXOLOGY: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen