

**April 2, 2023; PALM SUNDAY  
SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON  
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church  
Singers: Praise Team**

**PRELUDE:** Ruth Antal/Osthus Singers

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

**PASTOR:** *Hosanna!*

**ALL:** *Hosanna to the Son of David!*

**PASTOR:** *Hosanna!*

**ALL:** *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*

**PASTOR:** *Hosanna*

**ALL:** *Hosanna in the highest!*

**HYMN #95 “All Glory, Laud and Honor”**

**CHILDREN’S SONG: Shout Hosanna!**

**READER: Steve Karban**

**EPISTLE LESSON:** *Philippians 2:5-11* 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**GOSPEL LESSON:** *Matthew 21:1-9* As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

*6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"*

**READER: Here ends the reading of God’s Word.**

**CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!**

**CONFESSION OF FAITH:** *Zechariah 9:9&10* “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.” Amen

**GLORIA PATRI:** *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER FOR OFFERING**

**HYMN #96 “Ride On, Ride On, O Savior-King”**

**SERMON TITLE: “THE PATH TO PEACE”**

**Zechariah 9:9&10; Pastor Tom Olson; April 2, 2023**

***Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen***

**HISTORY:** A history of the human race is a history of war. Most nations are established by war. Some families are in a war. Fighting seems to come easy.

**PLAN:** God has a plan for peace. It is the reign of King Jesus, the Messiah. Our Palm Sunday Old Testament lesson from Zechariah

gives us some insights into the peace of Christ. I am sure we all could apply them to our own lives today. Let's look at "A PATH TO PEACE" from Zechariah 9:9&10. THE PATH TO PEACE is...

## **I. A PERSON: PEACE IS FOUND IN KING JESUS**

***Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."***

PROCESSION: Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was acknowledged as the King of the Jews. When the religious leaders demanded that Jesus stop the shouts, he told them that if the people didn't praise Him, ***Luke 19:44, "the rocks would cry out."*** A PEACEFUL KINGDOM WAS AT THEIR FINGER-TIPS.

FICKLE: Christ presented Himself to them. But they changed their minds and by the middle of the week the fickle crowds rejected him and shouted, ***Luke 23:21 "Crucify Him!"***

US: We want to be different. Today we acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah. We praise Him for who He is and what He has done. We ***"rejoice greatly"*** today!

COMPARISON: They wanted an earthly king to take away their problems and make Israel great again. But we are happy with a humble king who rode his donkey right to the cross, like our song says, ***"Ride on, ride on, O Savior-King to dark Gethsemene, to untold agony."*** He is a King who is ***"righteous and having salvation."*** We rejoice because what we focus on this Holy Week is the great plan to save us from our sins and make us fit to enter the presence of a holy God for all eternity.

TRANSFORMATIONAL: Peace is found in a person, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He has changed my life and the lives of countless others. We rejoice because we have the joy of salvation. Jesus wants to dwell in our hearts by faith and give us the gift of forgiveness and eternal salvation.

INVITATION: If you don't have the joy of salvation, you can meet Jesus today and receive Him into your life. He is only a prayer away. THE PATH TO PEACE IS A PERSON...KING JESUS. It is also...

## **II. NO WAR: NO NEED FOR MILITARY WEAPONS**

***Zechariah 9:10a "I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken."***

MILITARY: The terminology here is the equipment of war, not hunting rifles. Some people believe that this is just figurative language of Christ's reign of peace through the church on earth. But I personally believe there will be a literal reign of Christ on earth when He returns for 1,000 years. In that day, the equipment of war will be turned into agricultural equipment.

Other Scripture teaches the same thing. Isaiah 2:3-4

***In the last days...  
The law will go out from Zion,  
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.  
4 He will judge between the nations  
and will settle disputes for many peoples.  
They will beat their swords into plowshares  
and their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not take up sword against nation,  
nor will they train for war anymore.***

LITERAL: If you take that figuratively, it is fine, but I personally take it literally and believe that in the last days that Jesus will literally reign from Jerusalem and will literally turn the weapons of war into farm equipment and gardening tools.

IMAGINE: Can you imagine how nice it would be if there never was war again? Can you imagine how wonderful it would be for the people of Ukraine if Russia and the United States would stop sending in weapons of war to destroy that land?

U.N: The United Nations was established to carry out this prophecy from Isaiah and have failed miserably. That is because it is not their job, in spite of the fact that those verses are engraved by the front door of the UN building in New York.

FAILURES: World peace can only come through the reign of Jesus Christ. I am not talking about the Catholic or Orthodox or Protestant Church. They all have failed miserably too. The Jewish temple and priest failed miserably. The people on Palm Sunday knew it. They needed King Jesus, we need King Jesus, our homes and marriages and banking industry and stock market and schools need King Jesus.

TONGUE: One of the most dangerous weapons of is the tongue...what we say. The book of James calls it a fire that burns down a whole forest. Jesus is the only one who can tame our tongues and take away the words that hurt and replace them with words that heal.

WHEN? Wars and mass shootings and crime will continue until Jesus comes back and makes things right. Don't put your faith in government to get it right. THE PATH OF PEACE will only come when Jesus returns and destroys the weapons of war.

### III. WORLDWIDE: PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TO MEN

*Zechariah 9:10b "He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth."*

WORLD-WIDE: Notice that this peace of Christ is World-Wide. It is not just personal revival or family reconciliation. It is proclaimed to the nations all the way to the **"ENDS OF THE EARTH."** Most revivals we know about are local. This one includes the whole human race.

Notice here that peace has two aspects:

1. IT IS PROCLAIMED;
2. IT IS TIED TO THE RULE OF CHRIST

**1. IT IS PROCLAIMED:** This statement brings us back to Genesis one when God created the heavens and the earth. Remember that time and again "GOD SPOKE" and it just came into being. The proclamation of the Word of Christ has the power to create. When we preach the gospel, it CREATES FAITH: *Romans 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

SIMPLE: All the Lord will have to do is speak the peace and His word will have complete, world-wide authority and the power to make it happen. That powerful word to create peace is even available right now and we should use it to proclaim peace in our little spheres of influence such as home and family. I need to do it more often, out loud in my home.

We can have a good portion of this peace right now according to *Colossians 3:15-17 "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be*

*thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*

**2. IT IS TIED TO THE RULE OF CHRIST:** Where is the kingdom of God? It is wherever Christ is ruling. The person in charge makes a difference. When our high school civics teacher was away from school coaching baseball games, we would get a substitute teacher, sometimes a secretary from the office. When she was there, the room was in chaos. When our regular teacher returned it was totally under control and quiet. Same class, different person in charge.

NOW: When Jesus rules over the earth, there will be “Peace on Earth” just like the angels announced to the shepherds at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. I long for that peace. To the extent that the we live under the good teachings of the Bible, we will have peace. Right now, Christ rules through His Word. People don’t have peace today because they don’t follow the Word of God.

CHURCH: You might argue that the church through the ages has not been peaceful. That is because the church has also gotten away from the Word of God. Deep peace and order comes to the lives of those who live by the principles of the Word of God and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. The rule of Christ brings peace.

OBSERVATION: When I see people live in sin and rebellion, I see people who live lives with no peace because they are not under the rule of Christ. But when they repent of sin and come under the good ways of God, they get a peace that they have never known.

*Psalm 19:7-10 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the*

*simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.*

CONCLUSION: A. THE PATH OF PEACE is WORLD-WIDE, B. IT MEANS THE END OF WAR and C. it is found in A PERSON, the Lord Jesus Christ. *Now may the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

**HYMN #1 “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”**

**HOLY COMMUNION**

**CHORAL BENEDICTION:** Tune “Edelweiss” *May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever-- Grant you peace, Perfect peace, Strength in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see His face, Feel His grace forever. May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever.*

**POSTLUDE:** Ruth Antal