

REJOICE

Rt. Rev. Louis B. King

Lessons: Matthew 21:1-17, John 12:1-15

Today is Palm Sunday. It is a day for great rejoicing. Hundreds of millions of Christian people, all over the world, are thinking about the Lord and how He came into the world to save the human race.

The wonderful thing is that when people on this earth think about the Lord, and particularly when they are grateful that He came to save them, then the angels draw near and enter into the minds of people on earth. As people on earth are able to understand what the Word teaches, the angels can share their happiness with them, and that is the way the Lord saves each one of us.

Today we want to think about this wonderful story of Palm Sunday, and see if we cannot hold the story in our mind, so that we can think a little bit about its meaning, and try to understand the wonderful things contained in it so that the angels can draw near to us.

Is the story in your mind? Do you know what happened on Palm Sunday? Yes. You've heard the story many times.

The Lord went to Jerusalem. He did not go into that city right away, but He spent the night with people who loved Him very much—Mary, Martha and Lazarus. They lived in a little town called Bethany, on the Mount of Olives.

Early in the morning the Lord got up and went outside. He could see down a valley and then up the other side to the beautiful city of Jerusalem. He could see His temple—the beautiful temple of shining white marble and gold, flashing in the morning sun.

That is where Palm Sunday began—in Bethany—and it concluded in the temple. So you want to have that picture in your mind.

Now the Lord sent two of His disciples a little way down the hillside to another village called Bethphage, and there He told them that they would find a mother donkey—an ass and its colt, and that the disciples should untie them and bring them back to the Lord. When they brought those animals back to Him, they took off their own garments and put them on top of the ass and its colt, so that the Lord could sit on the colt, for He was going to ride down the valley and up the other side into Jerusalem.

Now why did the Lord do this? He did this because of the ancient prophecy given hundreds of years earlier to the children of Israel: "Behold thy king will come unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass."

When the disciples saw the Lord sitting upon the colt, they became very excited, for they said, "This Jesus whom we love; He is our King. He is going to be a great King over us." And so they began to sing His praises, and their songs echoed across the valley and up into Jerusalem. Soon little children and adults began to sing also. A multitude gathered and they put their garments in the way. Some took off their outer garments and made a pathway, while others cut down branches from palm trees and waved them, the way they would when a conquering hero was coming home; for the Lord indeed had come to save them. You see, when the Lord first made men and women, they were good, but gradually they turned away from the Lord and lost their love for Him, and pretty soon even their love for each other. So the Lord came down on earth to touch people with His hands and heal them, so that He could turn their minds and their thoughts to Him again, and from His love, touch their hearts and save them. This is why the Lord came into the world, and this is the real meaning of Palm Sunday.

Then, after the procession had gone down into the valley and up into Jerusalem, the Lord went to the temple. He drove out all of the wicked and selfish people there—the moneychangers and the seats of them that had sold doves—for they had crowded the temple, and no one could worship the Lord any longer. Although the Lord is never angry, it seemed then that He was, because He drove those wicked men out of His house of worship. He will never allow anyone to interfere with the worship of Him by innocent people. The Lord gives us great freedom. We can turn against the Lord, and we can go to hell if we really want to, but the Lord will not allow us to take away anyone's freedom to worship Him. And that is why He drove out the wicked people from the temple.

Then the blind and the lame came, and He healed them, and the little children gathered and sang, "Hosanna in the highest."

Now that you have this picture of Palm Sunday in your mind, the angels of heaven can draw near and think about the meaning of this story. They do not see a town, Bethany, as you have it in your minds, but they think of the Lord's love—His great love to come down and save us. Bethany also represents remains that He puts in our minds when we are little babies, so that we will be sure to have something in our minds to receive His love. But if that love is really to come into our minds, we have to begin to think—to use our minds.

That is what the ass and the colt represent. They represent the power of thinking about the Lord, so that we can know Him and love Him. And when we

begin thinking about the Lord—really thinking—then His love can ride in on those thoughts, just the way the Lord rode upon the young colt.

The multitudes put their garments in the way. Our garments clothe us, they protect us, and they keep us warm. They do many things for us, so they represent the ideas we have in our minds about many things. Some of these ideas are wrong, some of them are right, but we must be willing to take these ideas and present them to the Lord. As these ideas are laid down before the Lord, we take up palm branches—spiritually—which means we acknowledge that the Lord’s truth is the only thing that can save us. We wave that truth when we turn it in every direction to use it in our lives. In order to be saved, we should lay down our own ideas, and we must take up the Lord’s truth and wave it in every direction. When we do this the Lord’s love comes into the house of our mind—like the great city Jerusalem—and right to the center of our worship, to our will or the inner temple of our heart. And what does the Lord find there when He comes to save us? A lot of selfishness, which only He can remove by the power of His truth. As He removes the selfishness from our hearts, then all of our ideas that were only part-truth—ideas that were crippled and blind—can come to the Lord and be healed. He enables us to see clearly. He enables us to use His truth in a healthy, wonderful way, just as if He healed our limbs.

Then the little children came to the Lord singing, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” This is the innocence, the willingness to be led by the Lord that He builds in our hearts when we forget ourselves and allow the Lord to save us. “Hosanna to the Son of David,” the children sang. Remember what the Lord said: “Unless ye become converted as one of these little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God.”

Indeed, we want the Lord to come, not just on Palm Sunday, but we want His truth to come triumphantly into our minds every day of the week, so that we can sing with all our hearts. “This is the day that the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.” “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” “Hosanna in the highest.”