

Dear people who worship Jesus,

Declaration of Independence states, *“We hold these truths to be sacred & undeniable; that all men are created equal & independent, that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent & inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, & liberty, & the pursuit of happiness; ...”* (Wikipedia) (pic of Declaration) That declaration was written when the colonies that would become the United States were trying to get out from under the rule of the King of England.

When you think about that it might seem a little strange that we gather to worship and declare our allegiance to a king named Jesus. It is not strange at all. We have reason to **Praise Jesus, the Messiah King!** We can take our cue from the crowd that gathered on that first Palm Sunday. As we watch them we can learn what we can do for King Jesus. As we listen to them we remember why he is our Messiah King.

1. With your service

When a dignitary comes to town, there are all kinds of preparations. Years ago when the Queen of England visited the United States, there was a formal dinner at the White House. You can only imagine the servants and workers preparing for such an occasion.

So there were preparations for King Jesus to ride in to Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. People honored Jesus by serving and preparing the way. We also will have opportunities to praise and honor him with our service.

A. First I want to point out that he is so great and powerful that he does not even need servants or our help.

1. We are told that Jesus approached Jerusalem. He did a couple of things that only God can do. He told the disciples exactly where the donkey was that he would ride and he told what would happen when they tried to take the valuable animal. They found the donkey and the owners objected to the taking of the animal until the disciples said, **“The Lord needs it.”** The owners let them go. It is also impressive that Jesus’ rides an untamed animal and it does not buck him or resist carrying him, but does what he wishes. Jesus demonstrates that he is Messiah who is the all-powerful Son of God.

2. If there were any doubts that this was staged to merely make Jesus look special, we are told that the people were praising him for the many miracles or mighty wonders that he had performed. (37) They had personally witnessed many of his miracles that demonstrates he has the power of God.

B. The fact that Jesus does not need us to serve him, highlights the fact that it is a blessed privilege to serve him. Jesus allows and gives us opportunities to serve.

1. In Luke 19 we are told the disciples were allowed to fetch the donkey. The owners loaned it to Jesus. The people spread their cloaks on the donkey and on the road. Separately these things don't seem like much, but together they made for a wonderful Palm Sunday procession honoring Jesus.

2. Why did they honor Jesus? They believed he was the promised Savior who had come into the world to save them. They were filled with joy and that joy found expression in service.

C. We like the idea of being free people and living in a free country. We need to be careful. We are not trouble-free. We need a Savior not only from the troubles of this life, but we need a Savior to free us from eternal trouble. Jesus is the Savior King that God promised since the first trouble, the fall into sin. He came riding into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday for us too. He came to serve us and save us.

The greatest happiness and the greatest freedom is found in serving Jesus.

It is not uncommon in our churches for people to not want to do certain things. *"I don't want to set up chairs, sweep floors, to invite people to church..."* All these things may seem unimportant by themselves. Together, however, they add up to a worship of the greatest King of all time.

An example is that a lot of work goes into sending out missionaries in the name of King Jesus. A lot of prayers and many offerings are needed. When the missionaries are out in the mission field care packages and cards need to be sent. It may not seem like much when we sign a card in the entryway or we contribute a gift to the baby shower for the Apache missionary, but it all adds up to something important. We are serving our King and kingdom. There is real joy in doing it.

2. With your voice

There is a lot happy singing on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. We note that the original Palm Sunday crowd also praised Jesus with their voices. So we praise our King with our voices.

A. What were they singing about?

1. The Scriptures foretold that the Messiah would be a prophet like Moses. (Deuteronomy 18:15) Moses and taught the people and had performed mighty miracles at God's command. The people were praising God because Jesus was like Moses and in fact he was doing greater things than Moses.

2. The people also knew that the prophet Zechariah had prophesied that the Savior would come to them riding on a donkey. Zechariah had said he would bring salvation with him. So when they saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem they sang songs of praise. They were thrilled that the work of the Messiah was coming to fulfillment.

B. At the same time they are praying for God's blessing on Jesus as he comes to do his work. **"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"** (38a)

1. In the Old Testament times when the kings like David went to battle the people prayed for the king's well being and the success of his work. The people are seeing the greater Son of David going into battle for them. They are asking for blessings for him.

2. Which enemies was Jesus going to fight? The worst enemies of humanity: sin, death and the devil. These are enemies we can't defeat. Our own frailty and death reveals this. Jesus as the perfect Son of God was uniquely qualified to fight and win for us.

C. Today the church has at its disposal all kinds of music. The words can also be slightly different, but there is one thing we sing about on Palm Sunday and Easter. We praise Jesus and thank God for all his blessings because he went to battle against sin, death and the devil and he won for us. Our vocal chords may not always work the way we want, but we should be filled with joy because Jesus won this most important victory for us. He won our eternal salvation.

3. With heaven's peace

What is it exactly that Jesus came to do? He came to take away our sins and bring us heaven's peace. The people reference this in their singing.

"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (38b)

A. Jesus had to win that peace.

1. Over the years Jerusalem was not a place of joy, but sadness. It was there that King David committed adultery with Bathsheba. It was there that

Absalom rebelled against his father, David. It was in Jerusalem at the temple that that thieves had set up a marketplace for profit. We can't point a finger and shame them, because we have our own catalog of sins that bring sadness to our lives and to the lives of others.

2. Jesus rode into Jerusalem to battle for us by giving his life on a cross. As St. Paul describes it, **“He humbled himself even to death on a cross.”** (Philippians 2:5-11) Now he is our Savior King who had paid for our sins in full. His resurrection assures us of this.

3. You and I have peace in heaven. God is not angry with us, but has assured us that all who believe in Jesus are saved and have a home in heaven.

B. So we have a reason to praise Jesus.

1. There were some pharisees who tried to get Jesus to stop the people from praising him. Jesus said that if the people stopped, the stones would cry out. When Jesus was rejected by the Jews and Jerusalem was destroyed not one stone was left on top of another. That destruction cried out against those who had rejected King Jesus.

2. The point is God will be praised. Will you and I praise him? If we don't, others will. We have a great reason to praise Jesus. We can only live here so long. When we die, he has promised us heaven will receive us, because we have peace in heaven through Jesus. This is our joy and motivation.

Conclusion: As most of you realize that is another cycle of elections coming up in 2020. There will no doubt be many promises by candidates. Some may promise happiness through maintaining certain freedoms, some may promise happiness through prosperity. Some may try to promise all of the above and more. We certainly want to pray for good government.

As Biblical Christians we have comfort in God's sure words and promises. These lead us to praise King Jesus with our lives and voices. They tell us he has fought for us and freed us from sin, death and the devil. He rules our lives today and will keep us in his heavenly kingdom for time and eternity. We have a reason to rejoice and to praise him. Amen.

The Gospel - Luke 19:28-40
(NIV 2011)

28 After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 30 “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

32 Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

34 They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

35 They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

38 “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[a]

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

40 “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”