

Dear Followers of King Jesus,

The people of Zechariah's day were the Jews who had returned from living in captivity in Babylon. They were happy to return to the promised land. They were on a mission. Not only were they rebuilding their homes and the city of Jerusalem, but they were rebuilding the Temple where the Lord dwelled. They soon became stopped building. This was not because they had enemies, although they did. The prophet Haggai tells us that the reason was that they were too busy building their own homes and didn't have time for this church work. So the Lord sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to tell the people to get going with building of God's house. The Temple was important not only for worship, but it was the launch pad from which God's Word and the promises of the Savior went out to Palestine and to the world.

The main work of the Lord today is the building of the Holy Christian Church. It is a house not of bricks but of people. As Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:5, **“you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”**

The work of building Christ's church suffers from enemies and other challenges. Sometimes it slows down or stops because God's people become absorbed in their earthly lives. The voice of the prophet inspires us by calling us to repentance and reminding us of forgiveness in Jesus. We are reminded that we can do the work because Jesus accomplished his saving work.

Today's message from Zechariah, chapter 9 is very helpful. We hear... **Your King Comes to Build His Kingdom!**

### **1. His building brings joy to our hearts.**

I remember when we broke ground for the building of the church. (pic) There was a lot of joy for God's people in Surprise. So we are told by Ezra in his OT book that when they dedicated the foundation of the Temple there was a lot of joy. (Ezra 3:12,13) This was the place where God's word would be proclaimed. This is not an accident. As we see Jesus, the cornerstone of God's Holy Christian Church, riding into Jerusalem, he was coming to build or set up that foundation and it is something that brings joy to our hearts.

A. The people Zechariah spoke to needed hope so they could have joy. They had experienced a lot of tears.

1. The tears started when the prophets announced that they would be taken from their homeland and they were carried away by the Babylonians. In the book of Lamentations, Jeremiah weeps over the destruction of Jerusalem. There was hope, because the Lord promised that a remnant would return. They had returned, but living in a devastated land was not easy. Also at the dedication of the foundation of the Temple, the older people wept. The Temple that was planned was small and plain compared to Solomon's Temple which was one of the wonders of the ancient world.

There was another reason for tears, it was the people's sins. Zechariah and Haggai called the people to repent of their focus on their own homes and lives. They had selfishly abandoned the work of the Lord. They had given glory to their homes and not given glory to God and his house.

As we see Jesus riding into Jerusalem as Savior King we need to remember he is riding into town to take care of our tears too. He is certainly concerned about the frustrations we experience as we proclaim the Gospel and build his church. However, he rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday because of the tears that come from our sins. How many of us have promised, "I will be there. I will do this for you." Then due to a selfish focus, we forget or just don't do it. How many times have we promised to do something for Jesus, for his church, then we don't remember or we just don't do it. The Jews weren't the only sinners Jesus' rode into Jerusalem for.

2. The Lord in his grace is going to put away our tears. The prophet calls out to God's people to rejoice! This is not a tiny joy. They are to shout it from the roof tops. The reason is that this is no ordinary joy. This is joy that wells up in our hearts because of the forgiveness of sins. The prophet sees the Savior coming with salvation.

B. It is as if Zechariah were standing along the road going into Jerusalem and he is seeing Jesus on Palm Sunday. **"See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."**

1. When the Jewish people heard that a righteous king was coming they immediately thought of the Messiah or Savior. The Israelites had not had a king in 70 years. The last ones they had were greedy and self-focused. They didn't serve the people or God. There are some beautiful words that the heavenly Father speaks about Jesus in Jeremiah. **"The days are coming,"**

**declares the Lord, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.”**

(23:5) The Savior King would be a good king and would help people.

Zechariah also sees that the Savior is victorious. In the Hebrew it says, **“He will be saved.”** Jesus was saved when his Father brought him up from the grave. Jesus was victorious in that he suffered and died for our sins. The One who was righteous made us right with God by winning the forgiveness of sins. His victory is our victory.

2. We would think that the Savior King would come in majesty. But as Zechariah sees the Savior announces that he is “lowly.” In order to win the victory Jesus humbled himself and became a servant as St. Paul told us in Philippians 2. He came to win, but he won by submitting to punishment and death. His humble entrance into Jerusalem foreshadowed this.

C. Children aren’t the only ones who whine, *“Do I have to do this?”* Adults and Seniors do too. It isn’t just, *“Do I have to do my taxes?”* or *“Do I have to take that pill?”* Sometimes it’s, *“Do I need to serve on that committee?”* *“Do I need to serve cookies on Sunday?”* Someone could probably say, *“Pastor, I’ve done my part. I was serving cookies when you were still in diapers.”* That may be true.

Hebrews 12:2 says, **“For the joy set before him, he endured the cross.”** Jesus had joy in his heart as he served. He has given you joy! We have joy over the forgiveness of our sins. We have joy that we are helping people when we serve in the church. We have joy in knowing that our labor in the Lord is not in vain. It doesn’t mean that you must say “yes” to every request, but we do need to think about serving and see the joy in it.

## **2. His building brings peace to the nations.**

You may have heard that it is believed that a deadly gas, Sarin, was used by people in Syria to attack their enemies. There has been a response not only by our country, but from countries around the world. We live a world of violence and death. We are reminded of it every week.

Zechariah sees something that will cheer the tear stained faces of God’s people. The Savior comes to build a kingdom where peace reigns.

A. The Messiah proclaims (10), **“I will take away the chariots from Ephraim**

**and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken.”** He telling us that the instruments of war will be taken

away, destroyed and peace will remain. Someone might say that nothing has changed much in our world since that first Palm Sunday.

The peace that Jesus won was the forgiveness of sins. We have peace with God. Where people worship Jesus there is peace. You don't normally hear of Christians who stand on God's word fighting against similar Christians. Never-the-less, peace here on earth is not perfect. In fact we need to keep going back to Word and Sacrament to strengthen the peace we have.

When Jesus comes back and takes us to heaven, Zechariah's prophecy will be completely fulfilled. In heaven there will be no more war or unrest.

B. Peace in Jesus is wonderful. Jesus spreads it throughout the world. Zechariah sees the Gospel being proclaimed to the nations. Where Jesus rules in people hearts there is peace. Zechariah sees Jesus' peace reaching to the ends of the world.

C. You can see the believers of Zechariah's day putting their hands to work on the Temple. They were ready to send out the Good News and its peace to others.

With joy and peace in our hearts we can say with Isaiah, "**Here am I send me.**" (Isaiah 6) We help with the worship services. We bring our offerings for ministry work. We share our faith as someone asks about our faith and our Savior. We have peace in knowing that our King will help.

Conclusion: This is the beginning of Holy Week and the focus is on our Savior, Jesus. Since the story of the Israelites is about building God's house, we pause and think of what we are doing as a church. We aren't building a physical church, because he we have one. But we are helping build the Holy Christian Church. Who does God want us to build the church with? Young, old, rich, poor, Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Anglos, etc? Anyone! We witness and we welcome to church.

What we know is that King Jesus did the hard work. He set the foundation by winning our salvation. He did what kings don't usually do, he suffered and died for the people. He suffered God's wrath and the punishment for our sins. In doing this he brings the joy of forgiveness to our hearts. We are free of God's Judgment. He gives us peace forever. In doing this he has built his Holy Church. We are the living stones that make up the walls of the Holy Christian Church. (1 Peter 2:5) He uses us to bring in other living stones. We can rejoice and we can serve. King Jesus is leading the way! Amen.