

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth

Sunday, March 29th, 2026

Rev. Gerry Gallant

Behold Your King

Palm Sunday

Zechariah 9:9-10

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your King is coming to you.

Righteous and having salvation is He.

Humble and riding on a donkey.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Almighty and everlasting God,

We come before You today with gratitude and reverence, for You are the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth. From everlasting to everlasting You reign, and Your kingdom shall never pass away.

On this day we remember the joyful welcome given to Your Son as He entered Jerusalem. You sent Him as the promised King—righteous and bringing salvation, humble and riding on a donkey. We praise You for the mystery of Your grace, that the King of glory would come not in earthly power but in humility, to seek and to save sinners.

Lord Jesus Christ, we honor You today as the true Son of David and the Savior of the world. You are the righteous King who fulfilled the law of God, the humble King who walked the road to the cross, and the victorious King who rose from the grave and now reigns at the right hand of the Father.

Holy Spirit, we ask that You would be present among us as we worship. Open our hearts to receive Your Word. Turn our minds toward the truth of the gospel. Shape our affections so that we may love Christ more deeply and follow Him more faithfully.

May our worship today be pleasing in Your sight. Let our songs, our prayers, and our listening hearts bring glory to Your holy name.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Call to Confession

Hear the call of the gospel.

The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world in humility to save sinners. Yet our hearts are often slow to receive Him as our true King. We praise Him with our lips while holding back the obedience He deserves.

But God is rich in mercy and invites us to return to Him. As it is written, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Therefore, let us humble ourselves before the Lord and confess our sins together.

Prayer of Confession

**Merciful God,
we confess that we often praise Christ with our lips
while resisting His rule in our hearts.
Like the crowds in Jerusalem, we sometimes seek a Savior
who will serve our desires rather than transform our lives.
Forgive us for our pride and unbelief.
Grant us humble hearts that gladly receive Christ as King.
Cleanse us through His sacrifice on the cross
and renew us by the power of Your Spirit.
Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news of the gospel.
If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
Through Jesus Christ we have peace with God.
Thanks be to God!

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one
 For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever, Amen.

Hymn #218: "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

Hosanna, loud hosanna, the little children sang;
 through pillared court and temple the joyful anthem rang.
 To Jesus, who had held them close folded to his breast,
 the children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed amid the shouting crowd,
 the victor palm branch waving and chanting clear and loud;
 Messiah, God's anointed, rode there in humble state,
 'Hosanna, in the highest!' rang out their praises great.

'Hosanna in the highest!' that ancient song we sing,
 for Christ is our Redeemer, the Lord of heaven our King.
 Oh may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice,
 and in God's joyful presence eternally rejoice!

Responsive Reading

Psalm 118

118 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
 for his steadfast love endures forever!

² **Let Israel say,**
"His steadfast love endures forever."

³ Let the house of Aaron say,
 "His steadfast love endures forever."

⁴ **Let those who fear the Lord say,**
"His steadfast love endures forever."

⁵ Out of my distress I called on the Lord;
 the Lord answered me and set me free.

⁶ **The Lord is on my side; I will not fear.**
What can man do to me?

⁷The Lord is on my side as my helper;
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

⁸**It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in man.**

⁹It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.

¹⁰**All nations surrounded me;
in the name of the Lord I cut them off!**

¹¹They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;
in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

¹²**They surrounded me like bees;
they went out like a fire among thorns;**

in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

¹³I was pushed hard, so that I was falling,
but the Lord helped me.

¹⁴**The Lord is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.**

¹⁵Glad songs of salvation
are in the tents of the righteous:
“The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,

¹⁶**the right hand of the Lord exalts,
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!”**

¹⁷I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the Lord.

¹⁸**The Lord has disciplined me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): “Hosanna, Hosanna’

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Zechariah 9:9-10

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall speak peace to the nations;
his rule shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Sermon

Palm Sunday is a Sunday that almost everyone knows about, even non-Christians.

It stands as one of the most dramatic and emotionally charged moments in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a scene filled with celebration, anticipation, and expectation.

Crowds fill all the roads leading into Jerusalem. Pilgrims have gathered from across the Jewish world for the Passover festival, and the city is alive with religious excitement. Jerusalem normally held perhaps fifty thousand residents, but during Passover the population could swell to two hundred thousand or more as worshipers streamed into the city from every direction.

In the midst of this crowded and restless atmosphere, Jesus deliberately rides into the city in a way that captures everyone's attention.

Cloaks are laid down in the road before Him. Branches are cut from trees and waved in the air. Voices rise in celebration as the crowd cries out,

Matthew 21:9

⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting,
"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

It appears to be a royal procession, almost like the coronation of a king. The crowd senses that something monumental is happening.

Yet there is a deep irony in the scene.

The people are celebrating the arrival of the king, but they do not truly understand the nature of His kingship. Within a matter of days the same city that shouts 'Hosanna' will shout 'Crucify him!'

The same crowds that celebrate His arrival will either abandon Him or turn against Him. Palm Sunday therefore stands as both a moment of triumph and a moment of tragic misunderstanding.

It's a little like election season. A candidate runs for office, and different groups of people support that candidate—but for very different reasons. One group thinks he will lower taxes. Another thinks he will increase social programs. Another believes he will change foreign policy.

Everyone cheers the same person, but they are cheering for different versions of him that exist in their own minds.

The crowd thinks the King has come to take a throne.

But before He wears a crown of gold...

He will wear a crown of thorns.

This morning as we walk through the Scriptures I want to ask yourself a simple but life-shaping question: When the King of kings rides into your life, will you welcome Him for who He really is... or will you try to remake Him into the king you wish He were?

Palm Sunday shows us something both beautiful and dangerous.

It is possible to celebrate Jesus loudly... and still misunderstand Him deeply.

And if we misunderstand the King, we may end up rejecting the very One we thought we welcomed.

So for us to understand what is truly happening on that day we must look beyond the emotion and excitement of the crowd and do as we are always told to do, listen to the voice of Scripture.

The events of Palm Sunday were not accidental or spontaneous. They were the fulfillment of a prophecy written five hundred years earlier in the book of the prophet Zechariah.

The prophet declares,

Zechariah 9:9

**⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**

These words were spoken to a discouraged people who had returned from exile but had not yet seen the restoration they longed for.

Jerusalem was no longer the glorious capital it had once been under David and Solomon. The nation was weak, vulnerable, and subject to foreign powers.

Into that setting God gave a promise that one day the true king would come. He would not merely restore Israel politically; He would establish a kingdom characterized by righteousness, salvation, humility, and peace.

SO, when Jesus rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, He does so with full awareness that He is fulfilling this prophecy.

The arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem is therefore the arrival of the promised king.

Zechariah calls the people to rejoice and shout because **'your king is coming to you.'**

That phrase carries remarkable significance. The king does not remain distant. He does not summon the people to come up to him. Instead, he comes down to them. The king comes into their city, into their lives, and into their broken world.

This reflects the very heart of the Gospel message.

Many religions teach that human beings must climb their way up to God. It's like standing at the base of a mountain and being told that if you climb high enough—through morality, devotion, or religious effort—you might eventually reach the summit where God is.

But the Gospel tells a completely different story.

Instead of us climbing the mountain to reach God, God came down the mountain to reach us.

Palm Sunday is the King stepping down into our world.

The apostle John expresses this beautifully when he writes,

John 1:14

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Palm Sunday is therefore a visible demonstration of the incarnation. God the Son has entered history as the promised king, and He comes personally to His people.

Yet while the prophecy announces the arrival of the king, it also reveals the character of the king.

Zechariah describes the king as righteous, bringing salvation, and humble. Each of these descriptions tells us something essential about who Jesus is and why He came.

The prophecy first declares that the king is righteous. The word used by the prophet refers to moral purity and perfect justice. Throughout the history of Israel the people had experienced the leadership of many kings, but none of them were perfect. Even the best kings fell into sin.

David committed adultery and murder. Solomon turned to idolatry. Many other kings led the nation into corruption and spiritual ruin.

The history of Israel's monarchy is largely the story of failed leadership.

But the king promised in Zechariah would be completely different. He would be perfectly righteous. This description finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who lived a sinless life in perfect obedience to the Father.

The apostle Peter writes,

1 Peter 2:22

²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth

The sinless righteousness of Christ is essential for our salvation, because Scripture makes it clear that no human being can stand before God on the basis of their own righteousness.

Paul writes,

Romans 3:9-10

⁹ **What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin,** ¹⁰ **as it is written:**

“None is righteous, no, not one;

If sinners are to be saved, they need a righteous substitute who can stand in their place. Jesus Christ is that substitute. His perfect life becomes the foundation for the justification of all who trust in Him.

Zechariah’s prophecy also tells us that this king comes “having salvation.”

The language indicates that the king not only brings salvation but He embodies it. He is the source through whom God’s saving power comes to His people.

When the crowds on Palm Sunday cried out ‘Hosanna,’ they were using a word that originally meant ‘save now.’ Their cry was drawn from Psalm 118, a Psalm associated with the coming Messiah.

But while the crowd used the correct words, they misunderstood the kind of salvation Jesus came to bring.

Many expected Him to lead a political revolution against Rome. They longed for national freedom and political independence.

But Rome was not their greatest problem—sin was.

And the same question confronts us today: are we asking Jesus to fix our circumstances—or to forgive our sin?

Jesus came to accomplish something far greater than a political rescue. He came to save His people from sin and the judgment of God.

The apostle Paul summarizes the heart of this salvation when he writes,

Romans 6:23

²³ **For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

The salvation Christ brings is not temporary or political; it is eternal and spiritual. Through His death and resurrection He secures forgiveness, reconciliation with God, and the promise of everlasting life for all who believe.

Perhaps the most surprising element of the prophecy is the humility of the king. Zechariah says that the king comes 'humble and mounted on a donkey.'

In the ancient world, when a Roman general won a great victory, he would enter the city in what was called a *triumph*. He rode a magnificent war horse or chariot. Soldiers marched behind him. Captives from defeated nations were displayed. The entire parade was designed to show power.

But Jesus enters Jerusalem in the opposite way.

No war horse.

No army.

No display of power.

Just a humble king riding on a borrowed donkey, an animal associated with peaceful purposes.

This choice was deliberate and symbolic. It communicated that His kingdom would not be established through military conquest but through humble obedience to the will of God.

A humble King doesn't just save us—He reshapes what we value, what we pursue, and what we're willing to surrender.

The humility of Christ is one of the most remarkable themes of the New Testament.

Paul writes in Philippians that Christ,

Philippians 2: 5-7

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

The humility of Jesus ultimately led Him to the cross, where He willingly gave His life as a sacrifice for sinners. What appears to be weakness in the eyes of the world becomes the very means through which God accomplishes the victory of redemption.

The prophecy then moves beyond the character of the king to describe the mission of the king.

Zechariah 9: 10

**¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall speak peace to the nations;
his rule shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.**

This language describes the removal of instruments of warfare. The kingdom of the Messiah will not advance through violence or military conquest. Instead, the king will establish peace.

The verse continues by declaring that **'he shall speak peace to the nations.'** The peace described here is more than the absence of conflict. It reflects the rich Biblical concept of shalom, which includes harmony, restoration, and flourishing under the blessing of God.

Through the work of Christ sinners who were once enemies of God are reconciled to Him.

Paul explains this transformation in Romans when he writes,

Romans 5:1

5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The mission of Christ is therefore a mission of reconciliation. Through the Gospel, people from every nation are invited to experience the peace that comes from restored relationship with God.

You can see this kind of peace whenever the Gospel crosses barriers the world can't overcome—when people who would never choose one another are united as brothers and sisters in Christ. Different backgrounds. Different stories. Different sins. Yet one King, one cross, one peace.

Finally, the prophecy points to the kingdom of the king. Zechariah declares that **'his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth'**

This language echoes the promises of Psalm 72 and describes a universal kingdom that extends across the entire world. The reign of the Messiah will not be limited to Israel or to any single nation. It will encompass all peoples and all lands.

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of the public revelation of this kingdom, but its full realization awaits the return of Christ. At present the kingdom advances through the proclamation of the Gospel and the transformation of human hearts.

Every time someone repents and believes in Christ, the kingdom of God advances. Yet Scripture also promises that one day Christ's reign will be openly and visibly established over all creation.

Paul writes,

Philippians 2:9–11

⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Palm Sunday therefore places us between two great realities.

On one hand we see the humility of Christ's first coming as He enters Jerusalem on a donkey, moving steadily toward the cross.

On the other hand we anticipate the glory of His future return, when He will reign openly as king over all creation.

The same Jesus who rode into Jerusalem in humility will one day return in power and glory. Until that day the Gospel continues to go out into the world, inviting sinners to repent, believe, and enter the kingdom of God.

But there is also a tragedy in this story. The real tragedy of Palm Sunday is not that the crowds rejected the King. The tragedy is that they welcomed a King they had reinvented in their own image.

But Palm Sunday also warns us about the danger of misunderstanding Christ.

Some people want a political Jesus who will advance their preferred causes and defeat their enemies. People who are more upset when their party loses than when the Gospel is mocked!

Others want a therapeutic Jesus whose only role is to make them feel affirmed and comfortable. People who come to church to hear sermons that make them feel better rather than be changed by the true Word of God.

Still others want a permissive Jesus who never confronts sin or calls for repentance. People who have edited out any command of Jesus that feels uncomfortable in their lives.

The real Jesus refuses to fit inside our expectations. He is the King who demands our allegiance, calls us to repentance, and commands us to take up our cross and follow Him.

Too often we are like the crowds who welcomed Him enthusiastically, yet their enthusiasm was based on expectations that did not align with God's purposes. When Jesus did not fulfill their political hopes, their excitement quickly faded.

Some of us are still waving palm branches of admiration while our hearts remain far from submission. We want a Jesus who blesses our politics, fixes our finances, and keeps us comfortable or we rewrite Him as the Jesus who never confronts us—who only affirms, only comforts, only approves. A Jesus who exists to support our plans, not interrupt them. But the moment the real King puts His finger on our sin, or calls us to forgive, or commands us to surrender something we love—suddenly He feels 'too demanding.'

And that's often the moment we discover we weren't following Jesus as He is... we were following Jesus as we preferred Him to be, and we're not so sure about following the Jesus who says 'deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me'.

This Scripture reminds us that it is possible to admire Jesus without truly submitting to Him. Many people today want a version of Christ who meets their personal desires while making few demands on their lives. But the real Jesus calls for repentance, faith, and wholehearted allegiance.

The crowd on Palm Sunday shouted 'Hosanna.'

Just a few days later, many in that same city shouted 'Crucify him.'

Two thousand years ago the same lips that shouted 'Hosanna!' later screamed 'Crucify!' This week, the same hearts that sing 'Hosanna' on Sunday can quietly say 'Not yet' to Jesus on Monday. Which voice will yours be?

Receiving Christ as King means more than admiration.

It means submitting our priorities, relationships, and decisions to His authority.

Some of us need to bow before this King for the very first time. Others of us need to bow again—this time without conditions.

If you have never bowed before this King, today is the perfect day to do so. Simply tell Him: ‘Jesus, I receive You as my righteous, saving, humble King. Forgive my sins and make me part of Your everlasting kingdom.’

So, as we reflect on Palm Sunday, we are confronted with a simple yet profound question: Will we receive the king as He truly is?

The righteous King who fulfilled God’s law for you, the saving King who died and rose for you, the humble King who loves you enough to ride a donkey and go to a cross, and the coming King whose rule will one day reach the ends of the earth? The King has come—and He is still coming. All who trust in Him today will share in the blessings of His everlasting kingdom.

Let us Pray,

Lord Jesus Christ,
 You are the true King of righteousness and peace.
 Rule in our hearts by Your grace,
 so that we may serve You with humble obedience.
 Deliver us from the pride that resists Your will
 and from the blindness that misunderstands Your ways.
 Teach us to follow You not only in words of praise,
 but in lives of faithful submission.
 Grant that we may welcome You as our King today
 and remain loyal to You until the day
 when every knee bows before Your throne.
Amen.

Augustine of Hippo

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #217: “Ride On, Ride On In Majesty” (V 1,2,5)

Ride on, ride on in majesty;
 hark, all the tribes Hosanna cry.
 O Saviour meek, pursue thy road
 with palms and scattered garments strewed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty;
 in lowly pomp ride on to die.
 O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
 o'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty;
 in lowly pomp ride on to die.
 Bow thy meek head to mortal pain;
 then take, O God, thy power and reign.

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious and Sovereign God,
 We thank You for the gift of this day
 and for the privilege of gathering together in Your presence.
 As we have heard again the good news of our King who came in humility
 and who brings salvation,
 we ask that Your Word would take root in our hearts.
 Guard us from merely admiring Christ from a distance.
 Instead, lead us to bow before Him with repentance, faith, and joyful obedience.

Lord Jesus, You are the righteous King who fulfilled the law we could not keep.
 You are the saving King who gave Your life for sinners.
 You are the humble King who entered Jerusalem on a donkey
 and walked the road to the cross for our redemption.
 Teach us to follow You as our true King.
 Shape our lives so that our words, our choices, and our priorities
 reflect loyalty to Your kingdom above all else.

Father, we also pray for Your church.
 Strengthen Your people to proclaim the gospel with courage and compassion.
 Let the peace that Christ speaks to the nations be heard in our communities
 and seen in the way we love one another.
 Give us humility, patience, and unity as we serve You together.

We bring before You those who are weary, discouraged, or burdened today.
Remind them that the King who came in humility
is also the King who invites the weary to come to Him and find rest.
Comfort the grieving, strengthen the weak, and renew hope in every heart that looks to
Christ.

And now, Lord, as we prepare to share fellowship together,
we thank You for the gift of community within the body of Christ.
Bless our conversations, our laughter, and the time we spend together.
May our fellowship reflect the love and unity that You have given us through Your Son.

We also ask Your blessing upon the food that will be shared.
Receive our gratitude for Your daily provision,
and use this time to deepen our relationships and encourage one another in faith.

Send us from this place with hearts fixed upon our King,
ready to serve Him in the world You have placed us in.

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen.

Benediction

May the Lord Jesus Christ,
the humble King who came in peace
and the victorious King who will come again in glory,
grant you His grace and keep you in His love.
May the peace He speaks to the nations
guard your hearts and minds in faith.
And may the blessing of God Almighty—
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—
be with you now and remain with you always.
Amen.