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“The Triumphal Entry and Temple Cleansing: Symbolic Actions That Encode the Kingdom (Matthew 21:1-17)”

Daniel Kirk captures the dramatic irony of the triumphal entry:

Today is Palm Sunday--the day when churches around the world celebrate Jesus' "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem. This is the day when the crowds seem, for a fleeting moment, to get it right. Jesus orchestrates a royal entry: the Davidic Messiah comes mounted on his donkey, and the people shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"

But Jesus' journey to Jerusalem has been marked by moments that give us pause: do the people really know what they're saying? In Caesarea Philippi, Peter gets the title right: you're the Messiah! but he botches the content: Die?! I rebuke you, Jesus!

In Galilee, the passion prediction falls on deaf ears as the disciples enter into debate about who will be greatest. Outside of Jericho, the passion prediction falls on deaf ears as James and John come and ask for the seats of honor and glory in the kingdom.

Jesus is filling the title, "Messiah," with new content--the content marked by following Jesus in the way of a cruciform discipleship, the way of discipleship marked by sharing in Jesus' "baptism" and "cup drinking" on the cross, the way of discipleship marked by self-giving service in imitation of the Son of Man. When Jesus takes his throne, it is not the force of arms hoped for by Peter in the garden that leads to exaltation; rather, the royal title is displayed for the world as Jesus hangs on the cross.

Blessed is the coming kingdom? Yes. But what kind of kingdom? The readers of the gospel know, and the disciples should know, but... And so we see that in the gospel narrative their words do not mean what they think they mean. We see it. I hope... How is it that the king will take up his rule from the river to the ends of the earth, as Zech 9 predicts of the humble donkey-rider? And will his subjects be wise enough to live under his reign by embodying the same spirit of humility which brought it about? Will the "sons of men" be wise enough to follow the Son of Man? Or will they fill "coming kingdom of our father David" with all the baggage of their own glory?

Those are the questions with which we are confronted by the dramatic irony of Jesus' triumphal entry.

Kirk also gives a helpful reminder that Palm Sunday is full of ambiguity (<http://www.jrdkirk.com/2010/03/28/palm-sunday/>), and our liturgical re-enactments of the triumphal entry should keep that in mind:

Blogosphere Confessional: Palm Sunday creeps me out.

Don't get me wrong, I know that the whole thing has a lot going for it. In the Gospels, Jesus orchestrates the whole thing, sends in the disciples for the donkey, arranges his royal entry, and depending on which gospel you're reading even rebukes the would-be-rebukers.

So what's the problem?

I'm not so sure about the crowds and their cry. This seems to be one of those quintessential moments of dramatic irony that Mark is so skillful with. The people are praising Jesus as the coming king, but nobody has been able to hear what kind of kingdom Jesus has come to establish.

I am all for enacting the stories of the gospel, especially as they are moments that should deeply inform our own sense of self-understanding. But I wonder how profitable it is to place ourselves into this moment of dramatic irony, where the people whose voice and march we emulate really didn't know what they were saying.

Do we realize this as we process into our churches waving our own palm branches?

Do we remember that the next thing Jesus did after "triumphantly entering" Jerusalem was to turn around and go to bed?

More later, perhaps. I need to go cut a branch off our palm tree...

Blake Johnson wrote an article on Palm Sunday for TPC a few years ago. It's a very helpful overview:

Palm Sunday: Celebrating the Triumph of the King

The ancient Romans had a long tradition of celebrating the triumphal procession of a returning general who had just completed an impressive victory abroad. The massive procession would enter at the triumphal gate and make its way through Rome to the temple of Jupiter where the conquering leader would offer a sacrifice to the god. Foreign captives, displays of plunder, banners of battle scenes, loud music, and bawdy chants of Roman soldiers would precede the *triumphator*. Dressed in clothes resembling a king, the exalted leader would hear amid the cheers the constant whisper of an appointed slave: "Look behind you, you are only a

man.” This gentle reminder, however, would not stop many Caesars from viewing themselves as Lord and Savior.

The prophet Zechariah looked forward to a day when a king would enter Jerusalem and set all things right:

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. 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. (Zechariah 9:9-10)

Though Judah had returned from exile geographically, Zechariah sees a greater restoration that will be enacted by a “Branch” (3:8), a “Shepherd” (6:12), and “Jerusalem’s King” (9:9), who will bring peace and salvation to the nations. The hope of a coming king would loom large in the minds of the Jews of Jesus’ day. In fact, many Jews were expecting a powerful deliverer who would enter Jerusalem in a Roman-like way, overthrowing the occupiers by force. With the Romans destroyed, the Messiah could have his own triumph, go to the temple, reinstitute the sacrifices, and exercise rule over a revived Jewish state. What sort of Messiah, though, do we actually meet in Scripture?

On Palm Sunday, we celebrate Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem to commence his final week (see Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-40, and John 12:12-19). Jesus enters on a donkey saddled with garments and he passes through the road over cloaks and leafy branches, while the crowds recite Psalm 118:26: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” Jesus enters Jerusalem not with all the pomp and circumstance of a Roman triumph, but on a humble donkey. Jesus of course did not need a slave to whisper in his ear to remind him of his humanity, because as Jesus’ vocation reaches its culmination, “the one who comes in the name of the Lord,” would be proven to be the only God-Man. “Divine Caesar” and his *Pax Romana* were only parodies of which Jesus’ divinity and his promised peace would be the reality. Caesar would make his way to the pagan temple to sacrifice to Jupiter. Jesus, though, as soon as he enters Jerusalem goes to the temple and announces judgment on that central symbol of Israel’s identity. Jesus would not need the temple or an animal sacrifice because Jesus will offer himself as a sacrifice for the world. A triumph implies enemies have been defeated in a decisive and powerful way; yet, on Good Friday it would look like Jesus’ enemies would have the triumph. Palm Sunday, however, culminates in Easter Sunday, when the resurrected Jesus, having defeated death and all of his enemies once and for all, now triumphs as the King whose “rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.” Jesus’ triumphal

procession subverts all other kingly pretensions of ultimate victory and salvation. Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem reminds us that he alone is the "one who comes in the name of the Lord" and that he alone is Lord and Savior of the nations—neither a militaristic Caesar nor any other political messiah can accomplish what He accomplished.

What is significant about Jesus riding across leafy palm branches? We may find some clues in the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in which Israel takes palm branches to celebrate before the Lord. When Israel celebrated this feast, they would gather palm branches (Numbers 8:15) to make tents in which they would dwell to commemorate their tabernacle experience in the wilderness. Leafy branches in Scripture can symbolize God's glory cloud. Like the shade provided by leafy branches, God's glory cloud provided a covering—a tabernacle for Israel in the wilderness. Remembering this tabernacle-covering, Israel would dwell in tents made of leafy branches to symbolize God's presence, covering, and protection of them. With this in mind, we can begin to see a picture of what may be intended by Jesus riding on a "cloud" of palm branches. Jesus on Palm Sunday is being elevated and exalted, enfolded into the glory cloud of the Lord.

Jesus' triumphal entry on Palm Sunday anticipates his future visits to Jerusalem. Three themes from these Jerusalem visits emerge: salvation, judgment, and new creation. On Palm Sunday we focus mainly on Jesus' coming to commence Holy Week wherein he will complete the work of salvation by dying on the cross and being raised from the dead. But Jesus also promises another triumphal entry to Jerusalem in judgment. Right after Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he goes to the temple and continues his denunciation of it, since it had become a symbol for corruption and Jewish ethno-centrism (see Mark 11:15-18). After Palm Sunday, Jesus says that the Temple will be destroyed (Mark 13:1), and that he will come back to Jerusalem in judgment: "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26). Though Jesus does not come back physically to Jerusalem, he does come again "on clouds" (remember the leafy-branches symbolizing clouds) in the form of a Roman army of all things, when the Temple is finally destroyed in A.D. 70, exactly when Jesus had predicted (Mark 13:30). Finally, Jesus will enter Jerusalem again at the end of the ages. John writes, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:1-2). Jesus, offering himself as a sacrifice in his first coming to Jerusalem rendered void the temple, which was destroyed at his second coming to Jerusalem. In the New Jerusalem, John writes, "And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb." Jesus, once again, will triumph by entering Jerusalem, shining brightly as its light by which "the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it...." (21:24).

On Palm Sunday, let us remember and rejoice in the triumph of Jesus' kingship and let us labor toward that promised New Jerusalem in which one day we will welcome the king once again singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Peter Leithart (on his blog) provides several helpful thoughts on the triumphal entry.

An overview:

INTRODUCTION

Jesus arrives in Jerusalem like a king (21:5) and immediately goes to the temple. It is His first visit to the temple in Matthew's gospel, and He is not impressed. He condemns it as a robbers' den, and then sets up His own ministry of healing in the house of prayer.

THE TEXT

"Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. . .'" (Matthew 21:1-17).

ROYAL ENTRY

Donkeys are not highly regarded today, but donkeys and mules were a royal animals in ancient Israel (cf. Judges 10:4; 12:14; 1 Samuel 9:1-5; 2 Samuel 18:9; 1 Kings 1:32-40). Horses were associated with war, but a king on a donkey was a king of peace. The crowds know this, and hail Jesus as the King coming to Zion. Their acclamation (v. 5) combines Isaiah 62:11, which promises that salvation will come to Daughter Zion, and Zechariah 9:9, which portrays the arrival of a conquering king. They also celebrate His coming by hailing Him as "son of David" (v. 9) and by singing Psalm 118, the same Psalm Jesus later quotes to the Pharisees (Matthew 21:42). Like Jehu, Jesus rides on a carpet of garments (2 Kings 9:13), and like Jehu He heads to a temple that will be destroyed (2 Kings 10:18-28). When the magi visited Jerusalem, the city was stirred (Matthew 2:3), and it happens again when Jesus enters (21:10). The presence of the prophet Jesus, the son of David, throws the capital into turmoil. No wonder the scribes, Pharisees, and priests are disturbed.

FROM ROBBERS' DEN TO HOUSE OF HEALING

When He enters the temple, Jesus casts out the buyers and sellers and overturns the tables of the money-changers. He is not condemning cheating by the sellers in the temple; why would he throw out the buyers? Nor is He

displeased with the fact that there is a market for sacrificial animals in the temple; that was a natural product of temple worship (cf. Deuteronomy 14:22-27). The economic transactions of the temple symbolize the spiritual transactions, and interrupting the buying and settling literally interrupts the sacrificial worship. Jesus is pre-enacting a destruction of the temple, warning the people, in the words of Jeremiah, that the Lord would destroy their “robbers’ den” (v. 13; cf. Jeremiah 7:11), the place where robbers retreat for safety. Quoting Isaiah, Jesus says that the temple should be a “house of prayer” (v. 13), but He doesn’t set up a prayer meeting. He begins to heal. Compassion for the blind and lame is true prayer, true sacrifice. It’s what the temple is for.

CHILDREN

The chief priests and scribes are indignant at Jesus’ actions (v. 15; cf. 20:24), and especially at the praise Jesus receives from children. Jesus, though, teaches that the kingdom of heaven is made up of “children” (cf. 18:1-5; 19:13-15). Infants and nursing babies are the true priests of Jesus’ temple, the ones who give Him fitting praise (21:16). In His first visitation of the temple, Jesus condemns the temple leaders and invites them to join the children’s choir of the kingdom. He leaves the city, and leaves them time to repent.

Jesus as substitute temple:

Jesus first uses *lestes*, “brigand,” when He’s in the temple in Matthew 21:31.

When the high priest’s guard comes to arrest Him, He asks why they are armed as if to arrest a *lestes* (26:55).

On the cross, the brigands are back, and Jesus is in the midst of them. AS the living temple, He is crucified between two of the brigands who populate the temple. It is a macabre ark of the covenant, Yahweh enthroned between two false cherubim-guardians, who do not stand guard at the temple gates but instead pollute it.

Jesus says the temple is a robbers’ den; He is crucified among robbers. He condemns the temple; He is the temple. All that to say: Jesus goes to the cross to suffer the temple’s fate. Zeal for His Father’s house so consumes Him that He gives Himself in its place.

On the use of Psalm 118 on Palm Sunday and in the liturgy:

Mark 11:9-10: Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “ Hosanna! ‘ Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

As Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, the crowds acclaim Him as the Davidic king, come to claim his throne in the name of the Lord. Jesus arrives with an entourage that precedes and follows Him, and celebrates His coming.

“Hoshana,” they shout; “Save!” The people celebrate Jesus’ coming as a deliverer and conqueror.

In their song of praise to Jesus, the crowds sing from Psalm 118, which is the climax of the great song of Hallel, which includes Psalms 113-118 and which was sung at the Passover and other feasts. It’s the same song Jesus will sing later in the week after His Passover meal with the disciples.

It is also the song we sing every week in worship. Part of the Sanctus is this quotation from Psalm 118: Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest! Every week we greet Jesus in His triumphal arrival. Every Sunday is Palm Sunday, as we greet Jesus coming to meet and dine with us.

As I said in the exhortation, the Jewish leaders don’t greet Jesus. This is a snub and an act of rebellion against a conquering Hero, the Divine Warrior who has triumphed over Satan and sin and disease and death and is now coming to receive His acclamation. They Jews will pay for their insult in AD 70. And we can fall into the same rebellion. Jesus comes to meet with us, but we are too preoccupied to pay attention, or perhaps we are too busy to even come out for the triumphal entry.

At this table Jesus is the Host who welcomes us. But Jesus is also coming to us; He comes to His own house, but we are His household servants who should be found busy in His business when He arrives. Jesus comes to us in one another, and we are called to accept one another at this table and elsewhere if we are going to be His disciples.

At this table especially, we shout “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!”

Again:

The crowds greet Jesus as He arrives in Jerusalem singing from Psalm 118: "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

That's also one of the phrases we commonly use in our liturgy. Many versions of the Sanctus, the "Holy, holy, holy," conclude with these lines from Psalm 118. Why do we sing this on the Lord's day?

After we confess our sins and receive the Lord’s assurance of forgiveness, we ascend to the Lord in song to join the angelic choir around the throne of God, who continually sing "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Your glory." In worship, we ascend to heaven to participate the heavenly liturgy.

We enter the heavenly choir; we also greet the Lord who comes to us. Heaven and earth join not only because we rise to heavenly places, but also because the Lord of heaven descends to be with us. We sing Psalm 118 because the Lord is coming to meet us.

This has profound implications for our understanding and practice of worship. God does not address us with a thundering voice from heaven; we do not praise, pray to, listen to, and dine with a distant God. God comes among us each week. He comes near to inhabit the praises of His people.

Every Lord's day, we celebrate a triumphal entry, as through the Spirit our King comes to us. Every Lord's day, we sing with Jerusalem "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest."

Helpful insights regarding Jesus' fulfillment of Zech. 9:

The verb "fulfill" is used some 18 times in Matthew's gospel, and 14 of those uses describe Jesus' fulfillment of something spoken by the prophets or by "Scripture." A double of the number of creation, Jesus brings a new creation; God spoke over seven days to create, and His spoken word is fulfilled 14 times to recreate.

Most of these are fulfillments with a twist. Jesus fulfills Hosea's prophecy about a new exodus by leaving Israel and heading *to* Egypt. Jesus bears the infirmities of the blind and lame by healing them (8:17). Fulfillment is rarely straight.

And that's true for Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, which fulfills the hope of Zechariah 9.

Matthew's quotation changes Zechariah at a significant point. Consistent with the triumphal procession describes in verses 1-8, Zechariah says that the king comes "just and endowed with salvation" (v. 9), salvation in the context referring to military deliverance. Matthew ignores that line and skips from "king is coming" to "humble and mounted on a colt."

Does this mean that Jesus' entry is not a triumphal entry? No; what's absent from a quoted text is often as important as what's present. Matthew shows Jesus as the conqueror. But by leaving out a line from his source text, he raises questions about the kind of conquest we should expect. Jesus is indeed just and a bringer of salvation, but He does it not with the sword but by submitting to the cross. This *fulfills* the hopes of Zechariah.

Again:

Matthew doesn't know where to put his "fulfillment formulae." In chapter 2, he quotes Hosea when Jesus is leaving Israel; in chapter 21, he quotes Zechariah 9 before Jesus has climbed aboard the double-donkey mount.

Jesus gives instructions to His disciples (vv. 2-3, then there's a quotation from Zechariah (vv. 4-5), then the disciples do as Jesus tells them (v. 6-7a), and only then does Jesus mount up (v. 7b). You'd think the quotation would come after verse 7, but it doesn't. What's up?

It might be argued that Matthew's quotation is simply anticipatory. Maybe, but that's not the way things work in chapter 2; the placement of the

quotation from Hosea highlights the Egypt-ness of Israel. It seems that, somehow, Jesus' requisition of the donkey and foal – and not His riding on them – fulfills Zechariah most directly. How?

Perhaps we can explain this by noting that Genesis 49 forms part of the background to Zechariah and Matthew; the prophet and the evangelist triangulate with Jacob's blessing on Judah, in which Jacob predicts that Judah, the one with the scepter, will tie a "foal" and a "donkey's colt" to the vine.

Jesus' instructions to the two disciples refers to a tied donkey (though no vine), and that suggests that the finding and loosing of the donkey is itself a revelation of Jesus' kingship. Even before He mounts, He is the king coming to daughter Zion.

Further, Jesus claims the donkey and foal as "Lord" (v. 3). He is the meek Lord who inherits the earth, the true Adam who rules over the beasts of the field (cf. Jesus' reference to Psalm 8 in v. 16).

Finally, it may have something to do with the double-animals themselves. Do they represent Israel and the Gentiles? Two sides of a mobile throne?

Mother and daughter? Whatever the symbolism, Jesus' choice of animals says something about His royal status even before He sits, enthroned, on the garments.

David's exit from the city and Jesus' return:

When Absalom took over Israel, David fled east, over the Kidron and up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went (2 Samuel 15:30). He had two donkeys with him (2 Samuel 16:1-4).

David returns to Israel, and to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 20:3), but it was hardly a triumphal return. Still weeping for Absalom, his first act on returning to his house was to put away the concubines defiled by his son. Hardly a home-coming.

Then Jesus comes, with two donkeys, from the Mount of Olives (Matthew 21), with singing and rejoicing rather than with weeping. This is only the third time the Mount of Olives has been mentioned in the Bible (the second is Zechariah 14). Jesus' arrival is the much-awaited return of David.

Jesus and the ark:

Jesus' triumphal entry fulfills the typology of 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Kings 8, the ark's entry into Jerusalem.

Jesus is in the center of a procession, as the ark was in Israel's wanderings, preceded and followed by cheering crowds (Matthew 21:9). Jesus sits, strangely, on the back of two beasts of burden, which form a throne like the ark, cherubim flanking the Lord's seat. He enters the temple, as the ark did at Solomon's dedication.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is the return of Yahweh, enthroned on the ark.

On children and liturgy, from something I wrote elsewhere:

Because our children are included in the life of faith from the beginning, parents do not have to wait to begin giving their children Christian nurture. Indeed, the very early years of childhood are often the most important and impressionable period of life. This when soulcraft must begin! Certainly advertisers recognize this, even if Christian parents sometimes do not! The average child can recognize hundreds of brand names, piped into his brain from the beginning by the media. (Advertisers understand liturgy: it's all about shaping consciousness through constant repetition! They know the nature of children, and thus intentionally target them with their ad campaigns.) If our children have memorized more commercial jingles than hymns, more advertising slogans than catechism questions, and more video game strategies than proverbs, then we have to ask who is really shaping the souls of our children. If our children know more about the latest "American Idol" winner than Athanasius or Anselm, then something has gone awry. If they know more about their favorite NFL or NBA player than the Apostle Paul or John Calvin, we have misplaced our parental priorities.

Parents must begin cultivating covenant fidelity the day they get home from the hospital with their newborn baby. Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier said, "Give me the children until they are seven, and anyone may have them after." In other words, by seven years old, the concrete is basically set and children have been riveted into a trajectory that will carry them the rest of their lives. Horace Bushnell actually viewed the age by which the die was cast as three! Charles Hodge said more is accomplished before the child learns to talk to affect permanently his character for good or ill than all that is done in the following years.

For more on children and liturgy, see Jamie Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, ch. 4, esp. 136ff.

Throughout "Passion Week" Jesus is coming and going from Jerusalem (Mt. 21:17). After his triumphal entry and temple action, he goes back to Bethany to give everyone an opportunity to reflect on what's done and to give people an opportunity to repent. Jesus stakes his claim to the kingdom, shows them what his kingdom will look like, and then withdraws to give them time to surrender to him and embrace his new way of being Israel. Most of them would not submit to him as the shape of his kingdom came into sharper focus over the course of the week. Will *you* submit to him? Will you have this man – this God-man – to be your King, to live under his rule, to share in his work, to embrace his mission? Will you have him today and always? Will you lay your garments before him and mean it? Will you enthrone him on your praises? Will you embrace him even when he does not fulfill

your expectations? Will you crown him or crucify him? You must answer one way or the other, because when it comes to Jesus, there is no middle ground. He will not enter the gates of your life as a consultant, or a motivational speaker providing inspiration, or a genie granting wishes. He comes in as triumphant King or he does not come at all. Yes, he comes in meekness and gentleness, but also comes to cleanse to you, to destroy the old you and make you into a new person, a fit temple for him to dwell in. He comes not give suggestions or tips for better living, but to rule the totality of your life through his Word. Will you have him? Will you fight for him or against him?

It's been said (I think by Tim Keller riffing off of John Stott, if memory serves) that the essence of sin is putting yourself in the place of the King, and the essence of salvation is the King putting himself in the place of sinners. Will you have this King to be your Savior? Know assuredly you cannot have his healing touch without allowing him to transform you. You cannot have his forgiveness unless you commit to obeying him. His salvation is always a package deal and (as it has been put) he will not save those whom he cannot command.

Palm Sunday forces on us the same question it forced on the city of Jerusalem 2000 years ago. What will you do with Jesus? Will you receive him, cross and all? Will you be fickle about Jesus like the crowds, praising him one day, and jeering him the next? Obeying him one moment, disregarding him at another? Or will you be completely sold out to him? He gave himself for you – you must give yourself to him in return.

Palm Sunday reminds us of the joy and challenge of following Jesus. To be a follower Jesus is to celebrate his kingdom. Friedrich Nietzsche chastened the Christians for their lack of joy and vibrancy: "They would have to sing better songs for me to learn to have faith in their Redeemer: and his disciples would have to look more redeemed." Will you share in and model the joy of Christ's reign? Will you do your part to look more redeemed by this King? There is great joy in living under the reign of this meek and merciful Ruler. We should put that joy on display.

But there is also a challenge. It is easy for us to want to remake Jesus in our own image. To create a Jesus tailored to suit our interests. We like the Jesus of Palm Sunday, and the Triumphal Entry. But do we also like the Jesus of Good Friday? The Jesus who cleanses the temple, condemns our pride, and calls us to take up our crosses and follow him? We live in a culture where everyone "likes" Jesus. You won't hear anyone say anything bad about Jesus. But that's because they have molded Jesus into a Savior tailored to their own tastes and desires. What would happen if they were confronted with the *real* Jesus? Is your Jesus an imaginary fraud or the real thing? How are you answering the call to follow the crucified King?