

# The Lord of the Lamé (Palm Sunday)

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[0:00] It's great to worship with you all. It's Palm Sunday today and one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church and it's my great joy and honor to serve King Jesus and preach his word this morning.

Matthew 21, 1-17. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word. God, you are the God of light and glory.

God, your brilliance exposes all our sins. But Lord, also strangely, your light also warmly invites us, sinners, to come to be forgiven, to be received.

So Lord, reveal yourself this morning to your people. Exalt your son, Jesus Christ, that we might behold his majesty and his meekness and that in our encounter with him and in our faith in him and union with him might be transformed from one degree of glory to another into the likeness of your son, Jesus Christ.

Help us to behold him today. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please stand if you are able so that we can honor God together as we read from his word.

[2:17] Matthew 21, verses 1-17. Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, go into the village in front of you and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her.

Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, the Lord needs them. And he will send them at once.

This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, say to the daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

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.

[3:37] And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, who is this? And the crowd said, this is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.

And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple. And he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

He said to them, it is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them.

But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did and the children crying out in the temple, Hosanna to the son of David, they were indignant.

And they said to him, do you hear what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, yes. Have you never read? Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise.

[4:50] And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there. This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. In his defense of Christianity entitled *Pense*, which simply means thoughts in French, the 17th century mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote this, I do not admire the excess of a virtue as of courage, except I see at the same time the excess of the opposite virtue as an Epaminondas who had extreme courage and extreme benignity.

For otherwise, it is not to rise, it is to fall. One does not show his greatness by being at one extremity, but rather by touching both at once and filling all the intermediate space. Pascal uses Epaminondas, a 4th century B.C. Greek general and statesman, as an example of a person who had both extreme courage and extreme gentleness and kindness. Extreme courage on the battlefield, but extreme kindness and gentleness in his private life. A person who only possesses extreme courage, Pascal considered a brute. a person who only possesses extreme gentleness, Pascal considered a weakling. Unfortunately, it is common for Christians to see Jesus as either of these two extremes.

[6:32] Some see him predominantly in his kindness and gentleness and meekness. This is the saccharine, sentimental Jesus, the gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

others see Jesus predominantly in his majesty and fiery holiness. The Revelation 19 Jesus with eyes like flames of fire and a sharp double-edged sword coming out of his mouth to strike down the nations.

Of course, neither side will openly acknowledge that they have this one-dimensional view of Jesus, but if you listen to the way they talk and the way they deal with sinners, you can tell that they functionally have a one-dimensional Jesus.

Referencing this Pascal quote that I just cited, C.S. Lewis, Oxford professor and theologian, once wrote in a letter in 1959, gentle Jesus, my elbow.

he's a Christian, you know, he can, yeah. Gentle Jesus, my elbow, the most striking thing about our Lord is the union of great ferocity with extreme tenderness.

[7:48] Remember Pascal, I'll skip the quote since I read it already, add to this that he is also a supreme ironist, dialectician, and occasionally humorist, so go on.

You are on the right track now, getting to the real man behind all the plaster dolls that have been substituted for him. This is the appearance in human form of the God who made the tiger and the lamb, the avalanche and the rose.

He'll frighten and puzzle you, but the real Christ can be loved and admired as the doll cannot be. This is the real Christ that we see this morning in our passage.

The two dramatic scenes as Jesus enters Jerusalem and as he cleanses the temple show that Jesus perfectly combines these two extremes. Jesus is the majestic and yet meek Messiah who reigns over the blind and the lame.

So we're going to look at those two attributes of Christ in turn. First, his majesty, the majesty of the king, and secondly, the meekness of the king. Let's first talk about the majesty of the king.

[9:01] In a few months, 300,000 to 500,000 people will descend upon the Charles River Esplanade for Independence Day. Boston is called the Cradle of Liberty because of its pivotal role in the American Revolution, so it's no surprise that we attract one of the largest crowds for Fourth of July celebrations in the country.

The scene is similar to that Fourth of July scene in Matthew 21. Jesus is here entering Jerusalem on the week of Passover.

Jerusalem's normal population around this time would have been around 30,000, but during Passover, which was the most celebrated and eagerly anticipated festival that was observed by all Jews, the number of people in Jerusalem swelled to around 200,000 pilgrims from all over the Middle East in the Mediterranean region flocking to Jerusalem to celebrate this Passover.

Jerusalem proper could not accommodate all these people, and so tens of thousands of people would pitch tents all around and camp around the city. That's why later in verse 17, it says that Jesus went out of the city of Jerusalem to Bethany and lodged there.

There is simply no room in the city itself. And remember also that the Passover, which the Jews had been celebrating for over 1,400 years by this time, it was a celebration of God's deliverance of Israel, his people, from their slavery in Egypt.

[10:29] It's pretty much the Jewish equivalent of Independence Day, except that they weren't independent anymore. They were occupied and oppressed by the Romans, and they had been waiting for God to send another deliverer like Moses, another deliverer like King David to free them from this rule.

So imagine if in the unlikely event that we, the United States of America, were to be colonized by another country in the near future, and that we continue to celebrate Independence Day, right under the noses of our occupiers.

Can you see why that would be subversive? Why that would make the Roman rulers nervous? Imagine this scene in the first century Jerusalem.

A Jewish family gathers around the hearth at night, and they're eating the Passover meal, and the kid asks, Dad, what does the Passover mean? Oh, I thought you would never ask.

Long time ago, we were oppressed by these Egyptian rulers. They were violent and ruthless. Sorry, no offense to our Egyptian brothers here.

[11:43] You have been saved by the blood of the Lamb. Amen. Yeah. Not unlike the Romans today. Pharaoh even ordered the newborn Jewish boys to be killed, but one survived.

His name was Moses. And God, through Moses, struck Egypt down with ten plagues or ten disasters. And the final one was when he struck down all the firstborn males of Egypt.

But because of the blood of the Lamb upon our doorposts, the destroyer passed over us, spared us, and in doing that, God delivered us out of the hand of Egypt, and he can do it again.

He will do it again. The scriptures prophesy of a son of David who will come, a Messiah, a king, who will restore his kingdom to all its glory.

So, this is the Passover. It's pregnant with nationalistic, patriotic fervor. And this is why Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, is in Jerusalem during this time as we find out later in Matthew 27.

[13:00] Normally, he resided in Caesarea, which is modern-day Tel Aviv, but he came to Jerusalem for the Passover because he needs to keep order in case a riot breaks out.

He needs to maintain control. That's the mood. remember this mood as we enter into this scene in verse 1. Now, when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples.

Each of these three locations is theologically significant. I don't have time to get into them all, but the political leaders that are around the world in our country often have to be mindful of the symbolic implications of their actions, including where they hold their rallies, where they announce their campaigns, what song they play as their campaign is announced and they come onto the stage.

Ronald Reagan launched his general election campaign in 1980 in front of the Statue of Liberty, positioning himself as the keeper of the flame of liberty. Barack Obama announced his candidacy in Springfield, Illinois, indicating that he is from the heartland, from the land of Lincoln, and that he too is a historic figure like Lincoln.

In a similar way, Jesus has very deliberately chosen the Mount of Olives as the location from which he will descend into Jerusalem. Because it was prophesied in Zechariah 14, 4-5 that the Messiah, the promised king and deliverer of God's people, the representative of Yahweh, would come to Jerusalem and stand on Mount of Olives and that he would fight the decisive battles against the enemies of God and deliver them.

[14:44] So Mount of Olives is the beginning point of Jesus' inaugural parade. Jesus is not being shy about his royal status. Not only that, Matthew intentionally builds suspense by repeated use of the verb draw near in his book.

It says in verse 1 that Jesus and his followers drew near to Jerusalem and Matthew has used that verb only three times up to this point in the gospel and every single time is to say that the kingdom of heaven is near.

Jesus and his disciples drawing near to Jerusalem is bringing the kingdom of heaven near. Here is the king that was promised. Here is the king that brings the kingdom of God to bear upon this earth.

As Matthew 5.35 said, Jerusalem is the city of the great king, the city of David and here comes the son of David standing atop Mount of Olives of all places surveying Jerusalem and about to enter.

What else can all of this mean? It's about to go down. From there, Jesus sends two of his disciples on a mission in verses 2-3 saying to them, go into the village in front of you and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her.

[16:08] Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you you shall say the Lord needs them and he will send them at once. Jesus here displays supernatural knowledge and sovereign control of his environment in his instruction to the disciples to secure a colt for him to ride on.

A colt is a young male donkey. Usually, people waited until the donkeys were fully grown to ride them and the significance of the colt is that it is a brand new unused unadulterated donkey that no one else has ever ridden on.

That point is made explicit in the parallel account of this triumphal entry in Luke 19.30 which says that this is a colt on which no one has ever yet sat. Several Old Testament passages speak of the importance of bringing an animal for sacrifice to God that has never been worked and has never worn a yoke.

Numbers 19, Deuteronomy 21. So this colt represents purity that is fit for God. Fit for a king. I've never owned a brand new car ever in my life.

It's not because used cars are better. It's because used cars are cheaper. Right? A new car loses 10% of its value as soon as it is driven off the lot.

[17:37] 10%. And by the end of that first year, even if the car is in great condition, it will lose up to 20% to 30% of its value. And how does that make sense?

Right? A one-year-old car, I've never even dreamed of in a one-year-old car before. A one-year-old car is pretty much brand spanking new. Like you don't have to do any major repairs for years to come.

Right? That's a great car. How in the world is a one-year-old car lose, does it lose 30% of its value? How can a car that was literally just driven off the lot that has five miles on the odometer lose 10% of the car's value?

It doesn't make any sense, right? That's why used cars are good value. Right? An article published in the Journal of Product and Brand Management 2025 observes what all of us intuitively know, namely that with any kind of used product, there is this perceived contamination.

It's no longer pristine and perfect. Yes, the car only has five miles on the odometer, but someone else put that five miles on that car.

[18:54] It's not fully mine. It's no longer solely mine. It's not pure anymore. Of course, if I'm getting a car for myself, I'm going to get a good value used car.

Thank you very much. But if I'm getting a car for the king of kings, I'm not getting a used car. As if he's no better than that guy who rode in that car earlier on?

Absolutely not. Brand new, unused, pure, and pristine. Because the king of kings cannot ride on anything that's less than perfect. So he rides on the colt on which no one else has ever sat.

And an unbroken colt was usually introduced into service in the presence of its mother, lest it become nervous and jumpy. The mother's presence would keep the colt peaceful and calm.

And so that's why the disciples instructed to bring both the mother and the colt, the donkey and the colt. As they acquire the donkey and the colt, if anyone objects to this, them untying this donkey that doesn't belong to them and bringing it to Jesus, they are not instructed to apologize profusely and then beg for their pardon.

[20:16] Instead, they're simply told to tell the owner, the Lord needs them. The Lord is an exalted title often used throughout the Gospel of Matthew to refer to Yahweh, to God himself.

And the first time Jesus applied that title to himself was in Matthew 7 when he described himself as the supreme Lord and judge of all creation who will be sitting in the judgment seat on judgment day, at the end of the days.

So this is an extraordinary claim. The Lord needs them. And that is reason enough. In the ancient world, it was understood that a king had the authority and the right to impress the property of his subjects into his own service.

We have something similar in our own context. We call it eminent domain, which gives the government the power to take private property and convert it into public use, as long as they provide fair compensation for it.

If you have any questions about that, you can talk to Josh Granbo. He told me all about it last year. Similarly, Jesus impresses into his personal service the property of one of his subjects, which he has every right to do as the messianic king.

[21:29] So the disciples went and did as they were instructed, and they brought the donkey and the colt. So this is a command fulfillment formula in the Bible. It's highlighting Jesus as kingly authority. And just think about it for a minute.

Can I get two volunteers? Just two volunteers? Okay. Shall we? One more? Okay. David. Can you go to knock on the third house on Windsor Street?

And then tell them, ask them for the key to the car that's parked in front. And if they say anything about it, then just tell them the pastor has need of it. Right? Yeah.

Yeah. Why aren't you guys going? Yeah. Yeah. You see, they don't take me seriously enough.

You see? Yeah. And rightly so. Imagine what would happen. Not only is my information inaccurate, I don't even know where the house, third house would be.

[22:28] But no one would hand over the key to their car. And that's why you guys aren't going. The reason, of course, is simple. I don't have that kind of authority.

But King Jesus does. And then in verses four to five, Matthew tells us what the donkey is four. This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet saying, say to the daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

The first phrase, say to the daughter of Zion, echoes Isaiah 61, 11 to 12, which is a prophecy of how the Lord himself will bring salvation to his people. But most of the citation in verse five is from Zechariah 9, which we read for our call to worship this morning.

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.

It's a prophecy concerning the messianic king, and amazingly, it predicts that the king will arrive on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

[23:44] So Jesus is saying, here I am. I am the messianic king who fulfills this prophecy. I am the messiah that you have been waiting for.

This is the only time in the gospels that Jesus ever rides on anything. He's always walking all over the gospels, always walking with his disciples. Moreover, according to Jewish oral commentary on Leviticus and Deuteronomy, Jews were specifically instructed and expected to arrive in Jerusalem as pilgrims for Passover on foot.

So why does Jesus decide to ride on a donkey on this last mile into Jerusalem? There is a

widespread misunderstanding that I try to expose every Palm Sunday when I preach, that riding on a donkey is a lowly, humble thing, something that's reserved for common farming folk.

But that's not true. In fact, riding a donkey is a sign of royalty. To give you some examples, Judges 10, 3-4, it says that Jair of Gilead, a judge of Israel for 22 years, had 30 sons who rode 30 donkeys and controlled 30 towns in Gilead.

Riding a donkey signifies rulership, kingship. Similarly, in 1 Kings 1, 33-34, when King David commands Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet to announce that Solomon is his chosen heir to reign after him.

[25:20] What does he tell him to do? He tells him to take his donkey and put Solomon on it and parade him around the city, announcing that he is king. Finally, there's a letter that archaeologists found in the ancient Near East, in Mari, an ancient Sumerian city around 1760 BC, where a royal advisor counsels his king this way.

Verily, you are the king of the Haneans, but secondly, you are the king of the Acadians. My lord should not ride a horse. Let my lord ride in a chariot or on a mule, and he will thereby honor his royal head.

A military general seeking to conquer a city that doesn't belong to him gallops in on a stallion, but a king who owns it all rides in on a donkey.

No wonder, it says in verse 10, that the whole city was stirred up by Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. He's a talk of the entire town. Who is this? The word stirred is the same word used to describe how the earth shook in Matthew 27, 51.

The whole city is agitated, shaken, thrown into commotion, that there's someone who is claiming to be the son of David, the king, the Messiah, riding on a donkey and coming in to Jerusalem.

[26:49] And in verse 7, the disciples put their cloaks on the colt and for Jesus to sit on, and in verse 8, the crowd spread their cloaks on the road and cut branches from the trees and laid them down on the road.

What are they doing? Spreading garments on the ground so that a person does not have to walk on the bare earth is a gesture of honor and respect. It's similar to our practice of rolling out the red carpet for presidents and heads of state that come to visit on special occasions.

Jesus, you are too holy, too worthy to sit on the donkey's bare back. So here's a cloak. Jesus, you're too glorious and majestic to set your feet on this bare earth.

Here, let me soil my cloak instead. Here, take it. Let your donkey trot on it because that's how worthy you are. That's how glorious you are.

That's the idea. That's the majesty of the Messiah. And imagine what an awe-inspiring sight that would have been to see Jesus riding down from Mount of Olives on a donkey.

[28:06] Remember, there are hundreds of thousands of pilgrims in and all around Jerusalem. Remember, there are hundreds of thousands of all of them on foot all of a sudden amidst a sea of people.

You see Jesus rise above them all. amidst a sea of pedestrians, you see one man click, click, click, click, riding in on a donkey.

And everybody's heads are turning. Who is this? It's glorious. Jesus is not being demure about his kingship.

He's putting the entire city on notice and inviting everybody who sees to draw the inevitable and appropriate conclusion.

That's why the crowd's acclamation in verse 9 is particularly fitting. Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

[29:22] The title son of David is the traditional title given for the Jewish Messiah who is expected to be a descendant of King David. And throughout his ministry up to this point, many times Jesus has been called the son of David.

But he has been very guarded about his messianic identity. Some people call this the messianic secret in the gospels. But at this point in the narrative, as he is headed to the cross in Jerusalem, all reticence has gone out the window.

Now is the time for the revealing of the messianic king. Now is the time for Jesus' enthronement. And so the crowds cry out, Hosanna, which is taken from Psalm 118, 25 to 26.

It's a combination of two Hebrew words. One that means to save and another one that means to please, please. So it means together, please save us. It says in Psalm 118, 15, save us, we pray, oh Lord.

We are downtrodden and defeated. We are poor and needy. Save us, Lord God. We need you. King, come and deliver us. That's the cry.

[30:31] The cry that the Old Testament saints cried out to the Lord God himself. Now these crowds are crying out to Jesus. it's a significant claim.

Later on in verse 15, the children in the temple also cry out Hosanna to the son of David and the chief priests and the scribes probably at first are just laughing in disbelief. Look at these cute, ignorant children calling this man the son of David.

It looks like their parents, Messiah fever got to them also. Maybe they expect Jesus to tempt down this misguided fervor but Jesus doesn't do that.

He accepts their acclamation as the son of David, Yahweh's king. And when they realize that that's what Jesus is in fact doing, he says the chief priests and the scribes became indignant in verse 16. Do you hear what these are saying? I mean, you can't be that brazen and self-important, can you? They're saying that you are the coming Davidic king.

[31:50] They're saying that you are the Messiah. Please, disabuse the masses of their ignorance. Tell them that they've got the wrong guy right now. But Jesus responds in verse 16, yes.

Yes. I hear what they're saying. Yes. I accept it. Jesus continues in verse 16.

Have you never read out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise? I'll talk more about this a little later but Jesus is quoting from Psalm 8 verse 2 which is about how infants and babies praise God.

and shockingly again, Jesus applies this praise that is given to God to himself. Yes, Psalm 8 was about me.

Yes, it applies to me. I am the son of David and even more than that, I am the son of God. So the crowds are right to cry out, Hosanna in the highest because I am of the most high God.

[33:00] And then after saying that, Jesus leaves the chief priests and the scribes to pick up their jaws off the floor and then he leaves the city. This is the majesty of our king.

Do you think some Christians are a little too devoted? A little fanatic maybe? Hyperbolic and overly lavish?

In their praise of Jesus, think again. No praise is high enough. No shout is loud enough. No words are strong enough. No life is long enough to praise our savior and no song is sweet enough for our savior and king.

This is the majesty of our king. This is why what Jesus does in verses 12 to 13 does not surprise me. And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

He said to them it is written my house shall be called a house of prayer but you make it a den of robbers. some people read this and think man Jesus seems a little unhinged here a little bit over the top maybe he's got some anger issues absolutely not it's the only proper and righteous response for the son of God there's several reasons for this one what Jesus mentions house of prayer that's an allusion to Isaiah 56 when God spoke and said that one day when his salvation comes to Jerusalem that foreigners and Gentiles will come and pray and seek the Lord God in this house of prayer and where are they having all these commercial activities inside the temple they're doing it in the court of the Gentiles a little bit of

[35:08] Jewish ethnic superiority here hey it's crowded busy during the Passover where should we put these money changers and the pigeon sellers just put them in the court of the Gentiles and Jesus says no this is a place we're there to come and seek God my father I would not have them here he calls it a den of robbers that's an allusion to Jeremiah 7 where God accuses his own people of worshiping idols and Baals throughout the week and then they come to worship God on the Sabbath they come to worship God at the temple and he says no you're turning my temple into a den of robbers so there's an implicit there's an application here that Jesus is making to you obey other gods you serve other lords and you disobey me throughout your life and you come to the temple like you are my people you're turning into a den of robbers but centrally and I think the thing that

Jesus is most upset about here in addition to all of that the one that Matthew focuses on is the presence of the merchants and the money changers in the temple the fact that they exist in Jerusalem during the Passover is not at all remarkable pigeons were commonly used in sacrificial offerings in worship and it would have been difficult imagine if you're coming from far away coming from Saudi Arabia let's say you're trying to go to Jerusalem and that entire journey you're bringing along some pigeons!

from afar to say hey you can buy the pigeons here because it's much easier to transport money just bring your money you can buy the pigeons here and you can offer them a sacrifice similarly the money changers were a necessary part of the Jerusalem life at the time because the Jewish law stipulated that the temple tax which was required of every Jewish male 20 years old or older be paid quality but pilgrims would bring all kinds of coins from all over the place and so this was also a service that was offered to the pilgrims and of course the pigeon sellers and the money changers would make some profit off of these commercial activities and some people think that they were

being extortionists and stealing from people in that sense and that's why Jesus calls them the den of robbers I don't think that because it says Jesus doesn't merely drive out the sellers it also says that he drives out those who bought in the temple in verse 12 he has a problem with the buyers too so it's not unfair marketing practices that

Jesus is after he's incensed by the very presence of trade activity inside the temple in another instance Jesus appears to have cleansed the temple on another instance earlier in his ministry and that's recorded in John chapter 2 and there Jesus says specifically take these things away do not make my father's house a house of trade I know some of you guys are traders and there's nothing wrong with your job it's not the activity per se but that they were engaging in that activity inside the house of God why why couldn't they sell the pigeons and exchange currency outside the temple why did it have to be inside the temple imagine people trying to worship in the house of God with the din of commercial activity all around they imagine

Gentiles coming into the court of Gentiles trying to pray to God with all this ruckus going on around them healthy unblemished pigeons fit for sacrifice for sale a quarter of a quarter of a denarius for one bird half denarius for two if you pay a denarius I'll throw in an extra one five pigeons change money change money here we take drachmae denari every currency you can imagine and we'll give you sterling tyrian shekel for them two drachmae for half a shekel is the best exchange rate in the city I guarantee it it's so distracting and so disrespectful to God imagine that happening during our Sunday worship even if they were trying to do things that pertain to worship like oh

[40:12] I see you're carrying an NIV Bible this church uses ESV here here I'm selling it for \$10 per Bible if I had tables and vendors along the side it's like oh hey here here's the illuminated ESV Bible journal from Crossway you can use it to take notes on your sermons it it's distracting and it's disrespectful toward God the king right I mean when we when we talk to someone I mean we do this all the time but we should fix that right when we talk to each other often the person you're talking to will stare at their phone and you consider that rude right when we approach the living God the king of kings do we come with less reverence the church is not a cinema worship is not a concert and a sermon is not a

TED talk we gather in the name of Jesus Christ as the people of God in the presence of the king of kings himself and we hear from him as he speaks from his word and yes our worship should be joyful yes we're commended to make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation in Psalm 95 we're supposed to sing with thankfulness in our hearts to God but is there simultaneously a reverence fit for the king of majesty in our attitude and posture of worship humility and reverent fear Isaiah 66 2 this is the one to whom I will look he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word but if our king really is that majestic and glorious and fierce and holy as Jesus demonstrates who dares approach him we can approach this king because he's not only majestic but also meek and humble he perfectly combines the two extremes go back with me to verse five maybe some of you had this objection spring to your mind as I was preaching on this passage earlier if Jesus is not being demur about his kingship if he really is being in your face about his messianic identity if riding down on a donkey really is a sign of kingship and rulership why does it say in verse five behold your king is coming to you humble and mounted on a donkey on a colt the foal of a beast of burden doesn't that mean Jesus is being humble by riding on a donkey if Jesus is declaring his kingship openly by riding a donkey how is that humble the description of Jesus as humble does not stem from the lowliness of the donkey but from the fact that Jesus comes in peace as was prophesied in Zechariah nine the Greek word translated humble here in verse five is the same word translated as meek in Matthew chapter five verse five blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth the world thinks that it's the aggressive and the assertive who will inherit the earth but Jesus taught that it's the meek who will inherit the earth the same word is translated as gentle to describe Jesus in Matthew 11 29 come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light King Jesus comes in humility and gentleness because he does not come to lay a heavy burden on his people but to lift up their burdens King Jesus comes to a city full of his enemies people who are waiting with proverbial pitchforks to with trumped up charges slander him condemn him and crucify him on the cross yet instead of riding in on a stallion to wage war against them and subdue these rebels Jesus comes on a colt sauntering

down the mountain in peace not to kill sinners but to be killed in the place of sinners like you and me he comes to Jerusalem as the king who will be slaughtered like a lamb why is it humble for him to ride down in a donkey because he comes down even though he comes in his majesty he comes to embrace the weak and the poor and the needy and to save those who are lowly look at who comes to Jesus in verse 14 this majestic glorious king that we saw in his ride down to Jerusalem who comes to him in verse 14 and the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them the blind and the lame are the ones who are irresistibly drawn to this majestic king but how dare they

Leviticus 21 specifically said that no one who has a blemish may approach to offer the bread of his God for no one who has a blemish shall draw near a man blind or lame the blind and the lame even if you are a descendant of Aaron and of the priestly class in order you were not allowed if you were blind or lame to come and offer your sacrifices at the temple in 2 Samuel 5 6-8 when King David was attacking Jerusalem which was occupied at the time by the Jebusites the Jebusites jeered at David saying you will not come in here but the blind and the lame will ward you off they were so confident and secure in their own defenses that they mocked David saying you're not going to get in here even our blind and the lame can ward you off so David turned that mockery against him as he successfully conquered Jerusalem saying that they are the blind and the lame and that became a proverb in Jerusalem that the Jews knew at the time which is to say that the blind and the lame will not come into the house into the house of God they are referring to the Jebusites and those who oppose God in the joint security area inside the Korean demilitarized zone

I don't know if you guys have seen pictures of this between North and South Korea there's that dividing line historically I don't know if they still do it now historically a soldier from North Korea and a soldier from South Korea would stand face to face sometimes just feet apart staring each other down across the line an iconic Cold War standoff and I remember reading years ago that despite majority of North Korean soldiers being skinny short and malnourished they would always post the healthiest and the tallest and the strongest looking soldier at that post to intimidate the South to posture and say this is what all our soldiers look like you know but imagine if they put instead there a blind soldier groping about or a lame soldier on a wheelchair on that post what message would that send how does that glorify the king and yet those are the people that Jesus welcomes inside the temple the literally blind and the lame those who are proverbially the outcasts of society the people who have nothing to offer to the king they're the ones that king Jesus welcomes into his entourage this is the day that Micah 4 6-7 prophesied that we read for the assurance of pardon the lame

[49:10] I will make the remnant and those who were cast off are strong nations isn't this why over and over again throughout the gospel of Matthew we've seen Jesus make the blind see and make the lame walk that's kind of the signature miracle that Jesus does over and over again Matthew 11-5 Matthew 15-30 isn't this why in the parable of the banquet that Jesus tells in Luke chapter 14 12-14 the master of the house who represents God invites to his great feast the poor the crippled the blind and the lame this is what Jesus said earlier in Matthew 9 12-13 when the Pharisees were grumbling that Jesus was befriending tax collectors and sinners who were coming to him and repenting of their sin why do you welcome them and Jesus said to them it is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick for I have come to call the righteous not the righteous but the sinners I'm a doctor who have come for the lame

I'm a doctor who have come for the blind and it's not just the blind and the lame it says in verses 15-16 that the children are crying out to Jesus Hosanna to the son of David and Jesus says out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise if you trace that back to the original in Psalm 8 verse 2 it actually says strength instead of praise it says out of the mouth of babies and infants you have established strength or fortress or stronghold because of your foes to steal the enemy and the avenger how is it that God fortifies his heavenly dwelling place with strength how does God do that according to Psalm 8 it's what comes out of the mouth of babies and infants he means that by the babbling praise of babies and infants God strengthens his fortress and silences his enemies and defeats them this is why the Greek translation of the Hebrew

Bible the Septuagint said out of the mouth of babies and infants you have prepared praise and that's what Jesus is referencing so who are these soldiers and guards that King Jesus uses to fortify and represent the majesty of his kingdom infants and nursing babies how can that be isn't that why Jesus again and again throughout the Gospel of Matthew has been calling his disciples the little ones Matthew 10:42 186 isn't this why Jesus repeatedly said unless you turn and become like children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven so then who are the blind and the lame and the babies and the infants that Jesus invites into his kingdom they are those who acknowledge their need those who acknowledge that they are sinners in need of a savior people who recognize that their own righteousness and credentials are completely inadequate and depend on the mercy of the king alone for their salvation people who say here

I am I want to serve you I want to serve you king Jesus I want to give my life to you I want to represent you I want to fight for you but woe is me I am blind and lame they're the ones that Jesus calls into his kingdom I'll heal you are you sinner I will cleanse you are you blind I'll make you see are you lame I will make you walk I am the king for sinners sick and sore so come to me I am the king who died for your sins on the cross so that you might be forgiven and declared righteous it's for you that I roll down Mount of Olives to Jerusalem not on a war stallion but on a donkey that I might proclaim peace not to judge sinners but to justify sinners not to kill the rebels but to redeem them so will you come come to king Jesus today let's pray oh king Jesus we worship you you are worthy worthy of all praise honor all rule and glory you are worthy and we wish only that we could offer you the worship that befits your glory and station we only wish that we could render useful service to you our king we thank you dad that you do not call the righteous but that you call sinners to repentance and you justify them thank you father for your grace in sending Jesus your only son to rescue us it is to him and through him to you oh lord that we pledge our allegiance make us a faithful people who love and serve you all our days in Jesus name we pray amen