

Empire Church of the Brethren  
Sunday Service Sermons

29 March 2026

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

“ Say to the Daughter of Zion, see, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Palm Sunday is a time of Christian celebration.

On this Sunday Jesus was received the way we think he ought to have been received: disciples placed their garments on the donkey for a saddle, and people spread their coats on the road while others waved palm branches to prepare the way for Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem

Not only that, but the crowds shouted, “Hosanna,” which means “Save now.”

This is exactly what we want Jesus to do.

The crowds also cheered, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Jesus comes in the name of the Lord, but what does it mean to come in the name of the Lord?

How did he come then and how does he come to us today?

How he came then.

That day Jesus was the right kind of Savior.

That day he was living up to expectations.

This royal, triumphal entry into Jerusalem near the time of the Passover feast was ideal.

The people wanted a Jew to ride into Jerusalem and overthrow Rome.

The Passover recalled a time when God had delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt.

The great prophet Isaiah reminded the Jews of a time when God delivered Israel from exile in Babylon.

Now Jesus' kingly processional into Jerusalem rekindled hopes that God would deliver Israel from Roman occupation.

But Jesus didn't accomplish what the people expected of him, so their cheers turned to jeers.

“Hosanna” became “Crucify,” and blessing became cursing.

The crowds thought that the side with the strength was the side with the stronger God.

That's why bondage in Egypt, exile in Babylon, and occupation by Rome became theological crises and tests.

The ruling country had the ruling god.

We often fall into the same trap.

Strength can be the Devil's illusion.

Consider the strength and the concomitant errors and evil of Adolf Hitler.

In the Bible God is revealed best not in strength but in silence.

You remember that scene in Gethsemane when Jesus fell on his knees and pleaded with the Father: “If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.”

Not once but twice and even three times the Son prayed from the depths of his being, “If it is possible . . .”

How did the loving Father respond to his beloved Son?

With stony silence.

No ministering angels.

No voice from the blue.

Stark silence!

In dark Gethsemane Jesus would have to lean on conviction, not display; on faith, not sight.  
That is the way it was with Jesus and that is the way it must be with us.  
Be leery of those who so glibly and confidently say, "God told me, God led me, God taught me."  
Have they been to Gethsemane?  
Have they seen Jesus' faith?  
God most often comes to us, not in strength but in silence.  
The crowds that day wanted God to come in power, to overthrow Rome, but instead Jesus came in peace: to teach them to live with Rome and each other.  
Jesus did not ride a white steed into Jerusalem like a conquering military hero.  
Rather, he rode a donkey, a symbol of peace at that time.  
The Garden of Gethsemane shows the contrast of power and peace.  
Peter drew his sword and cut off a man's ear; but Jesus wouldn't tolerate that.  
Jesus came not to bear arms but to so change us that we would beat our arms into plowshares.  
Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is peace; where there is peace, there is the Spirit of Christ.  
How he comes now.  
How can Jesus come into our midst this day?  
How can that Palm Sunday so many years ago inform and energize our living now?  
Palm Sunday means that we can experience the presence of God.  
The Bible is essentially the story of God coming to humans: he came to us in a manger in Bethlehem and on a donkey in Jerusalem.  
He is Immanuel, "God with us."  
The angel announced the glad tidings of Christ's birth with the declaration, "He shall be called Jesus for he will save his people from their sins"; at the sight of Jesus that first Palm Sunday, the crowds spontaneously broke into shouts of exclamation, "Hosanna!" "Save now!"  
To save is why he left heaven for Bethlehem; to save is why he left Bethany for Jerusalem; and to save is why he wants to come into our lives now.  
Palm Sunday means that we can know the love and acceptance of God.  
In a fragmented, competitive world, we need to hear that word of wholeness and of the brotherhood of love.  
To live in times such as these we need the security of knowing that our Creator loves us and takes great delight in us; as Redeemer he had not given up on us but still seeks us; as Consummator he plans to bring us into his joy.  
God loves you.  
God accepts you.  
Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem announcing the good news that God loves you!  
Are you ready for his coming?  
Are you ready for Palm Sunday?  
Are you ready for our Savior?

Are you ready to shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who come in the name of the Lord"?

Are you ready and willing to follow the Christ that came?

The Christ of peace and service.

The Christ of sacrifice and obedience?

The Christ that wants to use you to bring the kingdom of God to earth as it is in heaven.

This is the Christ who came.

This is the Christ that comes today.

This is the Christ who give life and light to a dark and dying world.

If you ARE His then you are following the Christ who came in peace and love to save the world through sacrifice and a self giving love for all people.

This is the Christ of the Living Word of the Loving Lord and God Almighty.

Are you His?

Totally!