

April 1, 2020

King's Entrance

Matthew 21:5

"Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

No fooling! Kings don't enter triumphantly humbly and on a donkey. Invasion came with pomp and circumstance in order to overwhelm into submissiveness and recruit locals to their cause. Jesus enters not on a white horse but on the lowly donkey as humble servant to all mankind. No fooling! During this interim prayerfully consider our humble circumstances and let the King of kings enter your home.

Prayer: Sovereign God, you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord and with their lives praise him as Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

April 2, 2020 Don't Worry

Isaiah 50:7

⁷The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

The impossible seems possibly impossible. Yet the impossible is possible through God's grace and power. Consider God's promise to the Israelites in captivity. The promise of Savior took centuries to fulfill and many died hoping to see the promise fulfilled. Chicago Cubs fans endured more than a century without a pennant. Yet the faithful fans venture to Wrigley Field for each ball game. How startled we are when must have been to hear the fulfillment of the promise. There is no disgrace as we walk faithfully with the Lord in times when we seem to have no handles. The impossible is possible so don't worry.

Prayer: Jesus, you are God in the flesh. Take away the doubts that plague us and give us insight into our time and circumstance to remind us that we can trust you and not worry. Amen.

April 3, 2020

Solid Facts

2 Corinthians 4:1

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

We call some people "born optimists" because they always believe things will work out. Sometimes they pay little or no attention to the real facts. Paul's faith was not based on optimism but on solid facts. Paul repeatedly validated the scenario by remembering what God had completed in the past. He was shipwrecked! He was beaten and left for dead more than once. In the midst of all the hardships Paul moved forward in the name of Jesus. Although confined to our home and neighborhoods, God still provides opportunities for ministry via our phones and technology. For nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God.

Prayer: Jesus, because of you we do not lose heart. Nothing can separate us from your love. We pray for mustard seed faith built on solid facts. Amen.

April 4, 2020 Doxology Psalm 149:5

Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.

When I was growing up, we concluded many services with the doxology. "Praise God from whom all blessing flow. . .praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost." A man named his dog "Doxology" because the dog followed him everywhere. He was informed of a death in the family and hastily packed and travel across the state. He was greeted by his brother who immediately asked where "Doxology" was. His master replied that "Doxology" was at home because it wasn't appropriate for him to attend the funeral. His brother answered, "Doxology always brings so much love." Take the doxology with you in your heart and minds always. For the doxology knows no limitations as it lifts our spirits to the Lord.

Prayer: Triune God, all praise and honor and glory are yours. May we respond to you with songs and praise each day. Amen.

April 5, 2020 Shouts Matthew 21:9

⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

"Hosanna" was an expression of adoration, praise and joy! The "shouts" from the crowd probably startled the disciples. What had they expected in following Jesus? Even Peter's confession is lost in the "shouts" and the new possibilities that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem presents. Pray for the Spirit to enter your home and open new avenues for justice, peace and love.

Prayer: Jesus, help us not to sit and ask questions like why and where but to shout and follow you in faith. Amen.

April 6, 2020

Majesty

Isaiah 6:1-4

I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Isaiah runs out of language when he sees the "majesty" of God. "His robe filled the temple" speaks of vastness beyond his imagination. When we sing "Majesty" does your mind move beyond the ordinary to the extraordinary? How do we spell out the extend of God's presence and power in our lives? Can we glimpse the grandeur of God and not be spellbound and speechless? Listening to Handel's Messiah allows us to touch the hem of his robe. As we prepare for this Holy Week and Easter let us know that we are not forsaken. For this time and virus cannot keep us from the truth someday we will see him face to face.

Prayer: Majestic Lord, Hallelujah! Your reign is omnipotent. Move in us and give us the majestic sense of awe. Amen.

April 7, 2020

Acquittal

John 3:17

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

The verse behind the most quoted verse in the Bible presents the gospel in a nutshell. Its preciousness impacts our lives when we realize God's ultimate will and intention, not to condemn us but to save us. Through Christ the power of our sins is broken. Through Christ we are saved. Through Christ we are forgiven to forgive. Why are we so willing to look at the bad and condemn? Acquitted through Christ on the cross we are saved us to persevere through faith knowing that closed doors are only now as Jesus open new doors. Christ's love is contagious! How heavenly!

Prayer: Patient Father, help us not to condemn but to accept our acquittal through your grace alone. Amen.

April 8, 2020

The Best

John 2:8

Then, Jesus told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They ran out of wine at the wedding at Cana in Galilee. Heavy drinkers? Real celebration? The best wine was used first and the worst at the end. Now the miracle of water into wine illustrates the point that God saved the best for his people. He sent His Son into the world to save us. Time to celebrate! Time to thank the Lord! Time to stand in awe as the chief steward and have our taste buds tantalized by God's favor. For tomorrow, Maundy Thursday, we will taste bread that is His body and wine that is His blood. The banquet is set! Let all come and dine!

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for providing the best. Amen!

April 9, 2020

The Towel

John 13:7-9

Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

The "towel" was a symbol of humility at the time of Jesus! The servant washed the feet of the visitors as they entered the home. **Here is the King of Kings, washing filthy feet, and drying them with a towel. Here is a King whose symbol of authority is a towel. Jesus demonstrated and taught three lessons about**

leadership. First, the "towel" represents his whole life and leadership. Second, the "towel" represents his position on power. Third, the "towel" teaches us to serve God by serving others. Head to the bathroom and embrace your role as Christ's followers! How is Christ calling you to serve now.

Prayer: God of love, unite your church in its commitment to humble service. Make us your faithful disciples. Speak words of truth and grace through us. Encourage us in self-giving acts of kindness. Let us love one another as you have loved us. Amen.

April 10, 2020

Finished

John 19:30

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

"Finished!" usually means a sense of accomplishment! Having done the work Jesus was called to do His last words define and accentuate the "finished" mission. The Greek *tetelestai* refers to a work completed. This was a cry of triumph, not a moan of defeat! Jesus last shout to us inspires us to not only accept Him as Lord and Savior but to take up our cross and follow! As our stay at home call continues may we email shut ins or place offering at the food banks and "complete" what we are called to do today.

Prayer: Merciful God, your Son was lifted up on the cross to draw all people to himself. Grant that we who have been born out of his wounded side may at all times find mercy in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

April 11, 2020

Finding Time

Matthew 14:23

After Jesus had dismissed them, he went up on the mountainside by himself to pray.

My Mayo Clinic coach and the website encourage me to make time for me. Finding time to spend with the Lord personally and privately is sometimes quite difficult. Yet, Jesus took time to be apart from the world. Today during our interims from society is the day Jesus descends into hell to preach "good news" to the captives. His victory over death and Satan will soon be completed. Finding time for the Lord

can change our perspective and fortify our lives for the Lord and his will. During your interim today focus on listening to the Lord calling you.

Prayer: Spirit, give us determination and courage to find time for prayer and renewal. Amen.

April 12, 2020

Alleluia

John 20:18

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

One member of Alleluia Lutheran always says "Alleluia" after receiving the "blood of Christ!" Easter started at the tomb and the "Alleluias" echo and vibrate today centuries later. Christ sent Mary Magdalene and all the disciples out into the world to proclaim and shout "Christ is risen, indeed!" The "indeed" resurrects each day of our lives. The "indeed" in Greek means: "You aint seen nothing yet!" Stand at your front door and shout: "He is risen, indeed!" The angels will continue the shout and the resurrection of the Lord is fleshed out again in our midst. Read Revelation 19! Rejoice and shout "Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed!"

Prayer: God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

April 13, 2020

Creed

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Thomas' reaction to seeing the resurrected Lord proclaims one of the first creeds: "My Lord and my God!" One of the earliest creeds was "Jesus is Lord!" Each of

our three creeds: Athanasian, Apostles and Nicene were written to dispel certain heresies prevalent at the time. Emperor worship was strong at the time of Jesus and many proclaimed "Caesar is Lord." Caesar is long gone. Jesus lives on in our lives. Strong convictions are important as we walk in faith. Does your life say, "Jesus is Lord?" Jesus is Lord over heaven and earth. Do not lose heart during this time.

Prayer: Lord God, bless us with faith to say "Jesus is Lord" and for the rest of our lives. Amen.

April 14, 2020 Steadfast Psalm 89:1

**I will sing of the Lord's great love forever. Alleluia! Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

The word "steadfast" is antiquated and often lost in our society. Ever changing lifestyles and the web keep revealing changes in our earth and its people. We are riders on the merry go round and hanging on for dear life. Yet the sunshine, the waves on the shore, the fragrance of the pine tree and the grandeur of mountain points to steadfastness. God's love in Jesus Christ does not change. But God's love changes us. Thanks be to God for his love forever.

Prayer: Lord, bless us with your steadfast love forever. Amen.

April 15, 2020 Gifts 1 Kings 3:12

God said to Solomon. . .I will do what you have asked. I will give you as wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

**Alleluia! Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

God places us in the right age at the right time with the right gifts. Solomon asked for wisdom and scripture verifies his wisdom and we scratch our heads at some of his decisions. He was blessed with wisdom but failed to use it for God at times. His life of service blessed the people of God and divided the kingdom in

two at his death. Be careful how you use your gifts. May the Lord bless you with a wise and discerning heart at this time. Use your gifts to praise God.

Prayer: Counselor, shower our lives with blessings and grant us wisdom to use the blessings according to your will. Amen.

April 16, 2020

Authority

Jeremiah 23:5

A king who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

At times we have problems with authority and it generally is fueled by recollection of past experiences. We are weary about trusting due to unfair practices by authorities and remembrances that cloud our present judgment. We are to remember that we have positions of authority in our lifetime: parent, sibling, in sports, in groups, etc. Keep yourself in prayer for our president, congress and other leaders. All rulers have their failings and wisdom from God. We learn to forgive and look into the mirror before condemning our leadership. As Christ dealt with the authorities in his day. He called a "Pharisee" a "Pharisee" and spoke the truth in love not as judgment but to point out and rectify.

Prayer: Gracious Savior, grant us compassion and wisdom to accept our human limitations and the ones in authority over us. Teach them and us to live out justice and righteousness all our days. Amen.

April 17, 2020

VIPs

Luke 14:1

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

One Sunday while on vacation the visitation pastor preached in my stead. A three year old in the back row asked his mother where Jesus was. "Jesus is with us!" He repeated the question! Marlene said, "Jesus is in heaven!" He repeated the question again. Then, Marlene realized that John was missing me. The thoughts

of a child keep us aware that we are VIPs for the Lord. Imagine how the crowds watched Jesus and followed him. Imagine how we are VIPs for God watches over us and Jesus died for us. Jesus surrounds us with VIPs: Very Interesting Person - Very Informative Persons - Value in Partnership - Very Impossible Person - Very Into Pizza! Food for thought!

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you saved us for an important mission and ministry. Direct our attention to our VIP status as you have chosen us to be your disciples. Amen.

April 18, 2020

Duty

Luke 17:10

We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

By nature, we struggle with putting the interest of others above our interests and agendas. On the eve of Jesus' crucifixion, the disciples forgot about the washing of feet and Jesus took on the role. He used this time to teach his disciples the importance of serving each other and this world. Duty in the Bible is a panoramic picture of God's grace lived and fleshed out via Jesus' disciples. Wherever we are! Whoever we are! Do your duty more joyfully!

Prayer: Spirit of truth, make us joyful servant in Jesus' name. Amen.

April 19, 2020

Memory

Psalm 105:1, 5

Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name. . . Remember the wonders he has done.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Alzheimer takes away our minds and memories. Gradually all seems to be lost as our precious family member or friends forget more and more. The gift of memory

is to be viewed with awe and respect. Think on it. Take a few moments to remember God's grace in your life yesterday. Today! How many wonders can you remember? Did you give thanks? Call upon his name now and ask for the clarity of mind to recollect your blessings.

Prayer: Spirit, stir our memory banks and help us recall the wonders and gracious gifts given to us in Christ Jesus. Amen.

April 20, 2020

Nowhere to Run

Matthew 8:27

The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

There was nowhere to run! The small boat was near sinking and Jesus dozed peacefully in the back of the boat until they woke him. The disciples turned to Jesus and with three words he calmed the storm. "Peace, be still!" Jesus challenged every fragment of their faith. What sort of man is this? You can see the amazement in their eyes. You can sense their respect for Jesus. Nowhere to run! They don't have to run. We are in God's hands sleeping and awake, living or dying, crying or laughing. Since you have nowhere to run, enjoy a stay home vacation and celebrate life.

Prayer: Living Lord, we thank you that you are the all in all. Amen.

April 21, 2020

Salt

Matthew 5:13

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Jesus is absolutely correct. Try French fries without salt! You kiss them good bye. Try popcorn without salt and it loses its pop. All good cooks share the horror stories of too much salt or too little salt placed in a recipe. Christians are to be

the salt of the earth. We add flavor to God's world. Talking about Jesus and his role as Savior and Lord in our lives is the saltiness of the Gospel. We need to sprinkle a little salt wherever we go. Salt can melt the ice of hatred. Salt can flavor the scenario with love. Salt can preserve the importance of the message in hearts until they turn to Christ. Be salty today. Shake it for the Lord!

Prayer: Lord, help us remember that even the little things in life count. Challenge us today to shake it for Jesus. Amen.

April 22, 2020 The Litmus Test 1 John 4:2

This is how we can recognize the Spirit of God; every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

**Alleluia! Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Tests are part of your everyday life. We are tested at work regarding our abilities. We are schooled in tests and usually know how to inch by. How do we know who to follow? How do we know who is Christian? The simple test is asking who is your Lord? Who is Jesus? Do you believe in the Son of God and the Son of Man? Without Jesus living death is impossible! Without his suffering and death forgiveness is impossible! Without resurrection eternal life is impossible! God's Spirit causes us to confess Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

Prayer: Almighty God, help us discern the importance of Jesus coming in the flesh and our profession of Jesus as Lord. Amen.

April 23, 2020 Light Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light for my path.

**Alleluia! Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Have you ever experienced total darkness? The caves in life leave us without direction and stumbling. That is when we realize the value of light. Amy Grant sings "Thy Word" and uses this Psalm to vocalize the awesome fact that Jesus

lights up her life. How hopeless is the world without light! How hopeless is this world without Jesus! Jesus gives us direction of loving and living. Jesus is the flashlight in our darkness. Flip on the switch and enjoy the light of life. Light up another's life today!

Prayer: Savior, we thank you for providing unfailing light to guide us through life. Amen.

April 24, 2020 Define Love 1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is patient, love is kind. Love is not envious or boastful or proud.

**Alleluia! Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

We struggle with the definition of love because we attempt to define it as a noun. Love is an action verb that is defined by living out Jesus' love in our life. Love is possible when we are patient as Jesus was patient with us. Love is kind when we are kind to our enemies as well as our friends. Love is not envious but rejoices when others are blessed. Love is not boastful but is humbled by the gifts God gives us. Love is not proud but thankful for the ability to witness to God loves for us in Christ Jesus. How shall you define love today? How shall you make "love" a verb today? Let Jesus live through you and the world will see God's love in action.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for living out your love in our lives today. Amen.

April 25, 2020 Real John 6:55

For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.

**Alleluia! Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Real food! Our son, Mark, has many allergies and cannot eat most of the food we take for granted. Since he returned to live with us, we have had to change our menus and eating habits. He carries his antidote with him everywhere. It has saved his life many times. Jesus is real food and drink. How many times has he

saved us when we were lost or hungry or hopeless or more? At His table of grace we receive His body and blood given and shed for our sins. We receive real food for living a real life. His food last forever and doesn't get stale.

Prayer: Gracious Father, create a hunger in us to do your will. Amen.

April 26, 2020 Generosity 2 Corinthians 8:3

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

We offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us: ourselves, our time and our possessions, signs of His gracious love. Christ's church gave beyond their means to support their fellow believers. Their relief efforts at the time magnified God's love traveling over geographical and political boundaries. "Beyond their means" was beyond what they could imagine. Generosity flows from the heart of Christ's follower immersed in God's grace. Alleluia is blessed with the spirit of generosity. In Christ all things are possible. They didn't need security in their bank balance or in living out in faith the ultimate gift of Christ on the cross once for all.

Prayer: Empowering Spirit, help us first in our giving and then in our living. Amen.

April 27, 2020 The Man 2 Samuel 12:7

Then Samuel said to David, "You are the man!"

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

King David was the greatest king in Israel's history. His battle armor was stained with blood and his trophy chest filled with the spoils of war. Yet, his lust for another man's wife stained him. The prophet Samuel confronts him and says, "You are the man!" You are the one who sinned and destroyed this family. Nathan asks him to stand up and confess his sin and his great wrongs. King David is driven to

confess and becomes an ever stronger and more empathetic person and leader. Start you day in confess and end it with confession. Your day will be a blessing for you and others.

Prayer: Living Lord, keep us from coveting our neighbor's family and possessions. Show us our sin and hear our confession as we receive forgiveness in Jesus' name. Amen.

April 28, 2020 The People Luke 23:35

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him.

**Alleluia! Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Lutherans are immersed in the cross of Christ. You can imagine the sneers coming from the crowd as Jesus hangs on the cross. They had won the victory and Jesus hangs as the ultimate criminal. Whether they sneered or played the part of the spectator "the people" they participated in this moment. Jesus united them and his sacrifice created a unity. We are reminded that we are "the people." As we share in his suffering, we share in His triumph. We are the people of God! The dreadful drama will culminate with the ultimate triumph.

Prayer: Great Architect, thank you for the words in Luke and the reminder that we are "the people" who sneer and cheer. Amen.

April 29, 2020 Followers John 1:40

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who followed Jesus.

**Alleluia! Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

The world has both followers and leaders. President Calvin Coolidge invited friends from Vermont to the White House for dinner. The friends wanted to dine with the correct table manners and decided to follow President Coolidge's lead. All went well until the coffee was served. President Coolidge poured his into his saucer. The guest followed in suit. The President added cream and sugar. The

guest followed his lead. Then, President Coolidge leaned over and placed the saucer on the floor for his cat. Meow! During this Easter season we follow the one who teaches us to love and sacrifice, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer: Lord, help us to follow you alone. Amen.

April 30, 2020

Stranger

John 10:5

"They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Robo calls and the internet offer "strange voices" to entice and lead us astray. Strangers walk in and out of our lives each day. Sheep easily stray and are enticed into "greener pastures" or lose focus and are left behind. Yet, Jesus points out that "my sheep hear my voice!" Yes, when we hear our shepherd's voice we learn to associate Jesus with our protection, guidance, food. His voice permits us to recall these associations. Ministers serve the sheep in their spiritual concerns. Ministers set forth the Spirit of Christ as open door. After all this time in social isolation, indulge yourself in the Word via the earthly shepherds God has provided via His church.

Prayer: Great Shepherd, send shepherds into your churches and into the world to lead your sheep to green pasture and still waters. Amen.