

Palm Sunday
“How grand is God’s service to you!”
Philippians 2:5-8
March 29, 2026
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for Palm Sunday is from our Epistle reading: Philippians 2:5-8.

“5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

So far our text:

Who is that Man on the donkey riding into Jerusalem on this Sunday that we celebrate with palms and praises? If you said Jesus. You are absolutely correct. Humbly, Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph of Galilee, willingly rode into Jerusalem, knowing that it would be to His death. If you said God is riding on the donkey, you are also absolutely correct. God, the creator of the universe, of that donkey, of all the palms and people waving them, rode into Jerusalem to die. Yes, God died on the cross. That’s a true statement as we begin this Holy week leading to Good Friday.

Our text tells us a lot about who Jesus is. And it tells us a lot about what Jesus did for all people. And it tells us what followers of Jesus should also have – His servant mind, His servant humility, His “servantness”.

First, who is the Man on the donkey? He’s a true man and He’s true God. Jesus has two natures that are His since His conception by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was always true God from eternity. He never stopped being true God. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient – all powerful, present everywhere, all knowing, just a few of His divine attributes. He’s the Alpha and Omega – not having a beginning or end – eternal. Jesus is God, God the Son, the 2nd person of the Trinity along with God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit. One God united in the divine essence.

But, at the time of God's choosing, when the time was right, God the Son, our one Lord Jesus Christ, "begotten of the Father before all worlds" as we confessed in the Nicene Creed, "was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man;" Did God the Father become a true man? No. Did God the Holy Spirit become a true man? No? Only the Son, Jesus Christ.

Did Jesus stop being God then? No. Being in the form of God, our text says, He came in the likeness of man. He became a true man. Jesus took on our flesh. God in the flesh. God rode on the donkey in the flesh. God died on the cross in the flesh. God the Son gives us His very body and blood today in the sacrament of the altar in, with and under the bread and wine. We can't see Jesus body and blood, but He promises us it is present. The people saw a humble man on a donkey. But God was on the donkey.

For Jesus two natures – divine and human – are forever united. Jesus is a true man and true God.

You might ask, if Jesus was true God, then why didn't He just ride into Jerusalem and conquer all the enemies who hated Him and set up His all powerful rule then and there. Quick answer. Jesus didn't want to establish a kingdom where everyone is remains in sin and wickedness. His kingdom was not of this world, He told Pilate.

So how did Jesus establish His kingdom where peace and righteousness reign? By first removing all sin and giving the world His peace and righteousness! The only way Jesus could do this was to take on the world's sin. Serve the world by becoming a ransom for all people. Paying for all of our debt of sin with His most precious blood.

To do this, Jesus became a bondservant. He humbled Himself and "**did not consider it robbery to be equal with God**". He had every right to use all His power according to His human nature, but He allowed sinful men to crucify Him to the point of death on a cross. He had every right to do whatever He wanted as THE only all powerful, true human being that ever lived, but He chose not to exercise this power always.

Jesus his this power from Himself at times. He allowed evil men to capture Him, slander, torture, mock, and kill Him. Why? Why would anyone with such power not use it to defend Himself?

Because by not using it, Jesus defended us from eternal condemnation. He allowed Himself to suffer the torments of hell so that we never would.

Yes, Jesus used His power at times to show the world who He was. The miracles that Jesus did were miracles that only God could do. We've heard the last few Sundays how He raised Lazarus from the dead and gave sight to a man born blind. Science can't do that. AI can't do that. Only God can.

Jesus did these miracles for the purpose of showing the world who He was that sinful men would believe in Him and be saved.

We remember His very first miracle – changing water into wine. What does Scripture say was the purpose of Jesus using His power?

“This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”

Why was the man born blind in John 9 the disciples asked. His sin or his parents sin? Neither Jesus replied. No specific sin caused his blindness. All pervasive sin in this world manifests itself in general in all types of sicknesses, diseases, disabilities and eventually death. But Jesus is the answer, the only answer to sin, by His coming to serve us.

“Neither this man or his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him” John 9:3.

And this man confessed Jesus as his Lord.

“35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”

36 He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”

37 And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.” 38 Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.

Why did Jesus not go immediately to heal Lazarus so that he was four days in the tomb when Jesus arrived?

“This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” John 11

“45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. 46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.”

So Jesus allowed Himself to be handed over to be killed after He rode into Jerusalem. Now, His raising of Lazarus had caused the anger of the Pharisees to reach a fevered pitch. They couldn't bear that the people were praising Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem. It was expedient that one die for the nation said the high priest Caiaphas. Yes, Jesus used evil man's designs for His ultimate good...for our ultimate good.

This is God's service to us – His gran service to us of offering Himself as the Lamb of God for the sins of the whole world. Blessed is He who came in the name of the Lord for our salvation. Hosannah! God saves! God serves sinful man.

And God continues to serve us through His Word and Sacraments, giving to us this day the forgiveness that He won for all as we hear His Word and receive the washing of our sins in baptism and receive forgiveness in the Lord's Supper.

God serves us with His gifts. He came to us. He chose us. He showers His love on us and keeps us in the faith through these means of grace.

What should our response be? What does Paul tell the Philippians and us? Have the mind of Christ – the humble servant mind. God calls on us to put the interests of others first. He calls on us who are united in Jesus to live with this mind of Christ.

“fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

Is that possible? Of course, through the power of Him who overcame death and the devil and gives to us His Holy Spirit. He works in us to fear doing the things that are sinful and harmful to our faith.

“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;” And so that there is no misunderstanding, God tells us who is doing the work in you.
13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

God serves you always... in this worship service... in our daily lives...keeping us united in Him and serving one another until we see our Servant Lord, now exalted Lord and Savior Jesus -true God and true Man, using all His power now according to His human nature, with our own eyes on the last day.

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. “

Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)