

## I.N.I.

Palm Sunday  
April 14, 2019  
Phil. 2:5-11

In Christ Jesus, Who is our Humble yet Exalted King, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

The events of Palm Sunday are some of the strangest events you will ever witness. A lowly, poor Rabbi with a handful of followers comes riding into the capital city of Jerusalem upon a colt, the foal of a donkey. That picture in itself is out of the ordinary; a full grown man riding on a little animal. But now we also see a great portion of the city coming out and gathering around this Rabbi waving Palm Branches in the air, laying their garments on the ground, shouting praises and Hosannas; welcoming Him as their King. Have they all gone mad! Is this a comedy, a spoof on royalty? No this is real, more real than the reality T.V. shows of our day, although a strange reality. He who looked like no king, He who acted like no king, He who rode into Jerusalem like no king, yet is received and honored as a King, and He is the King of kings!

In that picture of the events of Palm Sunday we see both the **humility** and the **exaltation** of Jesus and it is exactly that truth that the Apostle Paul teaches us in our sermon text this morning. Our text answers for us this question:

### **WHAT KIND OF KING IS THIS?**

#### **1) A KING WHO HUMBLING HIMSELF TO SAVE US**

We read again vs. 6-8. **CHRIST JESUS, WHO, BEING IN THE FORM OF GOD, DID NOT CONSIDER IT ROBBERY TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD, BUT MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, TAKING THE FORM OF A BONDSERVANT, AND COMING IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN. AND BEING FOUND IN APPEARANCE AS A MAN, HE HUMBLING HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT TO *THE POINT OF DEATH*, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.**

Who is Jesus Christ? He is true God; begotten of the Father from eternity. Paul says He was in the form of God. The word form means “*what is essential to a thing or being.*” He was of the same essence of God. Not only does Scripture teach us that but we see it in Jesus’ actions. His miracles prove His divinity—His Godhead. He healed the sick and the lame; gave sight to the blind; changed water into wine; walked on water; raised the dead; knew the thoughts and hearts of people; prophesied of His future; forgave sins; and preached with the authority of God.

Yet even though Jesus was true God, equal to His Father in substance and essence, Jesus did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. This statement has a two-fold meaning--- “*robbery*” and “*booty.*” Booty speaks of the spoils a victorious king would publicly display after a battle. This display was for his honor, glory and fame. Although Jesus possessed this divine glory and power, He did not make a public spectacle of it and use it for His own earthly fame and fortune. He did not set up an earthly throne and kingdom to glorify Himself. Every miracle that Jesus performed was for the benefit of others and was done to the glory of His Father. Jesus consistently referred to Himself as “*THE SON OF MAN.*”

But neither was His glory as God something He stole, or got by robbery. It was His from eternity. This term denotes two things. Jesus did not misappropriate, steal His Godhead, it was His before time began; but neither did He exploit and display His Godhead for His own glory and advantage.

In fact, on the contrary, Paul says Jesus made Himself of no reputation; literally this means “*He emptied Himself.*” He emptied Himself, not of His Godhead, for He remained true God, but He emptied Himself of His full use of His deity. He set it aside and instead lived like an ordinary man, subject to all of the temptations, trials, troubles, and problems of humanity. Except for occasional glimpses of His glory, i.e. His miracles, His transfiguration—He looked like any other man on earth. In fact looking at Jesus, the last thing you would think was that He was God. He looked more like a poor servant. And that was exactly what He was, for us---A Servant to humanity! He was the

suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 who came to give, to serve and finally to be sacrificed. His lowliness offended some and disappointed others who were looking for a powerful, majestic, earthly king.

Paul continues in our text—not only was Jesus true God, He was true man, clothed in the very flesh and blood as we have, but the depth of Jesus humiliation extends beyond becoming man all the way to a despised and horrible death—death by crucifixion. A death reserved only for the worst of criminals; an extremely painful death; a death cursed by God. Jesus went beyond the humiliation of only becoming a human being; laying aside the full and constant use of His godly powers; He also humbled Himself to even allow other humans to mistreat and kill Him and even more than that to allow His heavenly Father to despise and condemn Him, to forsake Him and to endure the agonies of hell.

Why? Because in so doing He took our punishment upon Himself so that we might be free and live! So that we would never have to endure such eternal punishment!

When Jesus said *“It is finished!”* and breathed His last His sacrifice was complete. With His burial His humiliation came to an end; all was now done that needed to be done for us. Now begins the exaltation! This lowly looking King of Palm Sunday; this humble crucified King of Good Friday, has become the resurrected and glorified King of Easter; the Ascended and ever-ruling King of heaven and earth. Paul writes in verses 9-11: **THEREFORE GOD ALSO HAS HIGHLY EXALTED HIM AND GIVEN HIM THE NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, 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, AND THAT EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.**

Christ is now the King who has taken off His outward beggar’s clothes and put on His glorious robe of righteousness and power. No longer does He hide His Kingly power or glory. No longer does He use His godly powers only on a limited or restricted basis. He now fully exercises His majesty and power as the exalted God-Man, occupying the highest place of honor. He has a name: Jesus, Savior, Christ; the Chosen One, the Anointed One that is above every other name—the name above all others! Peter declared in Acts 4:12 **“NOR IS THERE SALVATION IN ANY OTHER, FOR THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN GIVEN AMONG MEN BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED.”** Only through faith in this exalted name; in His merits and actions can sinners like you and me be saved.

The name that was spoken against, ridiculed, derided and slandered in His humiliation is now the name that will be honored and glorified throughout eternity! The angels and saints in heaven bow in exalted glory before Him confessing His name. The believers on earth bow in humble submission, awe and reverence before Him. Even the demons and the damned in hell will have to acknowledge Him, bow before Him on Judgment Day and confess that He is Lord of ALL to their shame and disgrace!

For the believing child of God our praises now are faint and weak, sometimes even muffled because of our sins. But on Judgment Day and throughout eternity they shall ever be loudly proclaimed to the glory of God our Father, who sent His Son Jesus into this world for the purpose of saving all of us and now has exalted His Son to show to all the world—

**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, SALVATION COMPLETE!**

**WHAT KIND OF KING IS THIS?**

## **2) A KING WHO IS NOW EXALTED FOR US TO PRAISE AND TO IMITATE**

Let’s go back to the first verse of our text. Paul was not only teaching us some deep theological truths concerning the person and work of the Savior in these verses. He was not only reminding the Philippians and us of Jesus, the God-Man’s humiliation and exaltation; reviewing for them and us once more the greatness and unbelievable sacrificial love of Christ to endure such misery, pain, torment and death for our sake. He was also writing these words as an encouragement to them and to us to be imitators of our Savior. In verses 1-4 Paul wrote, **THEREFORE IF THERE IS ANY CONSOLATION IN CHRIST, IF ANY COMFORT OF LOVE, IF ANY FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT, IF ANY AFFECTION AND MERCY, FULFILL MY JOY BY BEING LIKE-MINDED, HAVING THE SAME LOVE, BEING OF ONE ACCORD, OF ONE MIND. LET NOTHING BE DONE THROUGH SELFISH AMBITION OR CONCEIT, BUT IN LOWLINESS OF MIND LET EACH ESTEEM OTHERS BETTER THAN HIMSELF. LET**

**EACH OF YOU LOOK OUT NOT ONLY FOR HIS OWN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO FOR THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS.** Then in vs. 5 he writes, **LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS...**,

*“Which was also in Christ Jesus.”* Paul is speaking of an attitude change that is to take place and will take place when Jesus Christ is in our hearts through faith. Our natural attitude is one of self first and foremost—what’s in it for me—how can I be served—to think of ourselves as better than others—to look out for our own interests rather than the interests of others. But Paul says *“let this mind be in you.”* Literally that reads, *let this be the constant and continuing pattern to your life.*

Imitate Christ’s lowly-mindedness, His self-sacrificial love which saved you. When we are touched by the Holy Spirit through these words concerning Jesus’ humiliation can we refuse to listen and follow this admonition? Can we live selfishly when we belong to such an unselfish Savior-God? Won’t we rather willingly serve one another with no thought of recompense, glory, honor or praise since Christ has so selflessly served us? Will we not be moved to joyfully give such small sacrifices of service to our Savior and to our fellow man because He gave the ultimate sacrifice for us?! Paul says, **AND HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD LIVE NO LONGER FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND ROSE AGAIN.** Since it was **HE FOR US**, it now will be, by the power of the Holy Spirit living in us, **WE FOR HIM!**

Jesus says to each of us: **"IF ANYONE DESIRES TO COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOEVER DESIRES TO SAVE HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT, BUT WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE WILL FIND IT. "**

Christians do not earn a share of Christ’s glory by their lowliness and suffering for Jesus’ sake. That’s a free gift of God’s grace. But Christ has promised us that even as He suffered for us and now is exalted on high; so also we who suffer for Him, we who imitate Him in our life of selfless giving, serving and sacrificing will receive that crown of life that Christ earned for us. The Christian’s life, like Jesus’ life, travels the path from lowliness to glory; from cross to crown; from humiliation to exaltation. May we follow in His footsteps, living for Christ by living like Christ—with humble joy seeking to glorify His name and give heartfelt thanks to Him for His great mercy and salvation to us.

Amen.