

Palm Sunday
Sermon Text: Psalm 31:9-16
Related text: John 12:12-19

Philippians 2:5-11

Date preached: March 24, 2013

Grace to you and peace from God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

“Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.”

This is a plea for help. Help is on the way. As we hear from John 12, crowds have gathered looking for the coming of the Messiah. What they get brings mixed messages.

The crowd rejoices at seeing Jesus enter Jerusalem. Many have heard or witnessed Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Obviously one who is so powerful will change the world and fix it.

No more oppressive governments. No more injustice. No more disease. There will be nothing about which to complain. No more hunger, homelessness and poverty.

All that will be true. Christ will conquer these things. Yet he rides into Jerusalem not brandishing his power. He comes in humility. Instead of a beautiful,

pristine, Clydesdale worthy of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he comes on a small donkey. It is the same way he arrived in Bethlehem some 33 years earlier while still in Mary's womb.

In this act of great humility, Christ died for us. He tasted the bitterness of death. He felt the abandonment of those near him. He descended into hell. He fulfilled what was spoken of him in the psalm.

He became a reproach to his enemies, neighbors and dismay to those who knew him. Not even Peter wanted to be known as one of his followers.

All this Jesus endured so that he could answer our prayer in this psalm. "He endured so that we would be rescued from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me."

He will die. He will rise from the dead. He has come to raise us up. He has come to give us new life. He has won, and because he wins, we who believe in him share in his victory both now and in the world to come.

"Make your face to shine upon your servant, an in your loving kindness save me." AMEN.