**An Apolitical Savior**

Based on [Matthew 21:1-9](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mt21.1-9)

Preached on November 29, 2020

First Sunday in Advent ~ *Ad Te Levavi*

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Today’s gospel is the fulfillment of a prophecy from the book of Zechariah, “Behold your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.” It shows that Jesus is the promised messiah, the king who is of the line of David. And it teaches us that our saviour is not political. He did not come in power but humble. He did not come to take over the government by force, but to be received by faith. He came not to save lives, but to save souls.

Of the fact that Jesus is a king there can be no question. Wise men came to worship him as the newborn king. The soldiers mock him with a reed scepter and a crown of thorns, and Pilate nails a sign above his cross saying Jesus Christ, King of the Jews. But he also tells Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world”. The Jews tried to seize him to make him king by force, but he eluded them. The prince of this world offered him all kingdoms, but he refused.

The Jews wanted a political saviour. That’s why they received Jesus with palms and accolades. That’s also why they shouted crucify him -- when he allowed himself to be arrested and abused. // That’s why Peter cut off the soldiers ear, but Jesus told him to put the sword away. Jesus did not come to save lives, not his own, and not yours. He teaches, “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul.” He say, “Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” He came not to save lives, but souls.

The kings of this world can only offer salvation politically. They cannot save souls, and they often even fail to save lives. And the world today -- like the Jews in Jesus day, -- wants a political leader. The Israelites rejected God because they wanted a political king so he gave them Saul. David, his successor, was not allowed to build a Temple for God because, though he had great faith, he was a political king, he was a man of war and bloodshed.

And so Jesus’ claim to the throne falls deaf on the ears of those who want a different kind of king, a king that saves lives and ignores souls. So it is important for you to be mindful. In prayer, when you face your anxieties and fears ask yourself which type of salvation are you being persuaded to seek--your life or your soul? Because you cannot serve two masters, you cannot prioritize both. “Fear not the one who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Instead fear the one who can kill both body and soul in hell.”

The world teaches you to seek your life. Death statistics are broadcast every single day by the media and every week warnings of new restrictions if the numbers don’t decrease.” Every day we are thus prompted to think, “Who can save us from this virus”. Those who want a political king seek a political solution.

Sinful mankind has never forgiven Jesus for the sin of coming in humility rather than power. The world teaches that our lives are too important to have to suffer a pandemic, or wars, or poverty, or pollution. “Save us Jesus, ride into Ottawa or Edmonton on a steed. Take over the government and do what our politicians won’t. These numbers are getting out of hand. These restrictions are too much.”

The worldly have faith in finding a political leader who will be a good king. But, the government, Paul says, has been given the sword. And those who live by the sword will die by the sword. Those who seek a political salvation in this world, will lose their inheritance in the next. Christians do not seek to save their life, at least not at the expense of their soul.

I say this to you because the greatest evil that this virus has caused is not sickness and death. It is not the inconvenience of new restrictions. The greatest evil is the panic and fear that it has caused, and the false faith in a political salvation to come. And this is not only those who panic over it’s spread, it is also those who panic over restrictions. Spiritually speaking, neither restrictions or nor lack of restrictions mean anything, what matters is a new creation.

Since this world is growing old, and will have to die before it is raised anew. Until that happens, how should you live your life? What kind of a person should you be? Anxious and frustrated? Hating your neighbor in your heart? Should you hold out for a hope that maybe this world is redeemable? Should you hope that maybe, if we elect the right leaders and complain about the right things, maybe this world can be taken up into heaven in a whirlwind, rather than through death and resurrection?

No. Place no hope in this world, and no confidence in the flesh. Instead, place your loyalty, submission, obedience and worship in the true king, Jesus Christ, who rules visibly in this world from a cross and invisibly from heaven. We preach Christ crucified and ascended. He came into Jerusalem, not to side with the Herodians or the Pharisees, but to side with his Father. He preached a truth that cut across the political divisions of the day. They didn’t crown him for it, they crucified him. Let us not expect a better fate for ourselves as faithful Christians. The world has not changed, only the hearts and minds of those who have been baptized into the death of Christ and raised with him to walk in the newness of life. They say you cannot control others, you can only control how you react to them. Don’t try to control the world, control your reaction to it.

Self control is a gift of the Holy Spirit and is promised to us who believe. As we enter the season that approaches the nativity of Christ, let us prepare our hearts by placing our trust in the true king.

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”