**The Humble Advent of Our Lowly King**

Based on [Luke 19:28-40](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk19.28-40)

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Advent 1

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We are in the season of Advent, a season of hope and expectation particularly of the coming of our Lord. Advent means “coming”, and we know from the last few Sundays of the church year, that our Lord Jesus will come in clouds of glory, and he will bring justice and judgment then. **At that time every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.** That’s because every eye will see him as he is, the almighty God who kills and makes alive (Deuteronomy 32:39). When Jesus comes in a cloud he will look like God...powerful and mighty.. What do you suppose he looked like when he came in a manger, on a donkey, on a cross? What sort of eyes would it take to see God in these places, in these things?...not the eyes of the world, but the eyes of faith (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Advent is about the Lord Jesus Christ coming to bring salvation. And so our Gospel lesson for today is the Triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the holy city, the place where he will, once for all accomplish salvation by being offered up for the sin of the world. **He comes into the royal city as the king, only his throne is his cross.** Who will kneel before his throne? Who will gather in his court? Who will see the cross for what it truly is?

And this is the amazing thing...Jesus knows what he’s walking into. He is going to face the punishment of hell, carrying the weight of our sins on his back to be numbered among thieves and criminals. He is going to suffer the stripes and the mocking of random crowds, to endure the gloating of his enemies, and finally to bear the wrath of God in our place**. He knows what's coming as he draws near to Jerusalem, and yet he goes and he does all things well.** There’s a prophecy in the OT book of Zechariah 9:9, “**Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**” One who brings judgment comes in glory with dignity and honour, and Jesus will come that way on the last day. But in his first coming he brings salvation, and he is humble in doing so. Jesus says in John 12:47, “If **anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save it.”** His first coming is not in power and judgment, but in humility and forgiveness. If instead he were the king going into battle, to fight, surely he’d ride a warhorse. Yes Jesus is the king, but he's going not to fight, but to suffer...and through his suffering and death win the victory.

Human beings, when facing a stressful or dangerous situation, the knee-jerk response is to either fight or flee. When Christ faced the opposition of the Pharisees and the scribes, of the Chief Priests and the Sanhedrin, he did neither. He knew that Jerusalem did not bode well for him, that therein lies the centre of the conflict not only between the religious leaders and him, but between God and his people. And he went there anyway. No Jesus didn't go there to fight, but he didn't flee either. You know how w**hen he was about to be arrested, Peter tried to fight, even cut off a soldiers ear.** Jesus told him not to fight, to put away the sword; and so what happens next?...Peter and the other disciples flee. Fight or flight is always motivated by pride and self-respect, but our pride doesn't let us see the third option, the humble way, not to fight or flee, but to stand and to suffer. Jesus' battle was not to create conflict, nor to avoid it, but simply to do the will of his Father and face what comes. **And the will of his Father was that he come into Jerusalem not in glory but in humility, not to fight but to suffer.**

Now, with the eyes of the flesh we look at suffering and think, "What's the point?" Doctor-Assisted Suicide was upheld as a human right in the Canadian Supreme court this year. Why? **Because why should anyone suffer?**  Divorce rates are at an all-time high. Why**? Because marriage is supposed to make your life happier, and what good can come out of remaining in an unfulfilling marriage**? These are flight responses, just as the disciples saw no purpose in suffering with Jesus and fled. Do you see the way God works? He works in a way that flies below the world's radar. 1 Corinthians 1:27-28 says, "**But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are**." Friends, nothing is more low and despised than suffering; and yet it was through the suffering and death of His Son that he accomplished salvation for the whole world...the very same world that thinks "**What good can come of suffering?**"

"Behold your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation, he is humble and mounted on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey." Doesn't sound like a kingly entrance, but that's the way his Father ordained it. **And so Jesus told his disciples to " go into the villiage ahead, you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. And tell the owners, 'the Lord has need of it.'"** And so they did--just as the Father ordained--and they set their cloaks on the colt and set Jesus on it. And as he rode along they threw down their cloaks, unrolling the red carpet as it were, and began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all Jesus mighty works they had seen him do saying the words of Psalm 118:26, "**Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest."**

You see, Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy of the messiah to come--that the messiah, would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. He didn't make this stuff up...it was ordained by His Father. And his disciples know this and begin to praise him alluding to these "messianic titles." You see, t**he messiah is the one who comes in the Name of the Lord. The messiah is the one who is to bring salvation. The messiah is the one who is to establish peace.** They know it, they speak of it to Jesus. And some of the Pharisees said to Jesus, "rebuke your disciples." Rebuke them.

You know the devil has a way of twisting every good thing to make it evil, to confuse mankind and tempt him to sin. For instance, Humility is a virtue is it not? Jesus says, the last shall be first. He says the meek shall inherit the earth, and other such things. Jesus humbled himself taking on the form of a servant, though being in the form of God he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but made himself nothing. And Philippians 2:3 says, "**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."** That's true humility.

But what is it called when someone is more concerned with *appearing* humble than with actually *being* humble. That's false humility. That's the person who says "sorry" all the time, even when they did nothing wrong. That's the person who says, "**when I die just bury me in a pine box because I don't need nothin' fancy."** Or "I don't need a funeral service, don't need nobody talking about little old me." Sounds like humility doesn't it? It sounds like the person is saying "Oh I'm not worth all the fuss." But it is a false humility, because the person is assuming that their body belongs to them and they decide how much it's worth. No, your body is not yours, it's God's, and for you to say it's only worthy of a pine box is to depreciate what God has made...you. If you say, "I don't need a funeral service", that's false humility, because you assume that the funeral is for you. It's not, it's for the proclamation of the gospel to those who come to hear. Assuming your funeral is to be "for you", is not humility, but pride in the first place.

False humility, it is the sneakiest sin of the devil. Think about it, it's the perfect setup for the Christian who doesn't want to be accused of pride. And so the devil can actually make Christians uncomfortable with saying the words "I forgive you."..because forgiving someone sounds so arrogant, right? Instead we say, "don't mention it" or "no problem." Our Lord tells us to forgive and obeying God's is never arrogant. **But we often fail to say the words, because "to forgive is divine, and we're just human after all and we don't want to give the opposite impression**" It's the same with Pastors who don't want to wear robes and vestments when ministering to people because, "**I don't want people to think I'm better than they are.**" That's a false humility. Because the real purpose of robes is not to glorify the man wearing them, but to hide him...and to remind those who receive pastoral care that they are not receiving it from Nathan Fuehrer who is himself nothing, but from Christ who is the one who ministers through frail and flawed men that he calls, to serve in His office and minister to his people. The last thing you want, ladies and gentlemen, is for Nathan Fuehrer to minister to you on your deathbed, or for Nathan Fuehrer to forgive you your sins. God did not give to the church...men. **He gave to the church...Christ, who comes to you by the blood of his Cross, forgives you your sins and gives you a clean conscience to meet him on the last day**. And one more example, those Fathers and Husbands who refuse to regard themselves as the head of the household because they don't want to be called sexist or give the impression that they think less of women. In that very way Satan has twisted the doctrine of humility so that people are more concerned with appearing humble than actually being humble and obeying God. False humility is no humility at all.

So Satan, through the Pharisees, tries to tempt Jesus to "rebuke his disciples." Why? **Because they are praising him and treating him as the messiah, and certainly a humble person wouldn't accept praise, nor would Jesus think he was as good as the promised messiah.** But Jesus knows he doesn't glorify himself, he doesn't elevate himself, he doesn't make himself the messiah. His Father chose him to be the one to deliver salvation; and if he would deny that title and that praise in order to "appear humble", he would be glorifying himself. But it is the Father who is glorified in the Son (John 14:13).

Advent is about Jesus coming to bring salvation. And he does so in real, true humility. He came into Jerusalem 2000 years ago and he didn't look like much. He didn't appear worthy of praise, but that's how God works. "**God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing the things that are."** And he comes to us even today in such mean estate. He once came in humility on a donkey, his glory hidden in mediocrity. So to he comes to you today in humble bread and lowly wine. How can bread and wine bring salvation? Because God chooses what is low and despised in the world to save us. The world thinks no good can come of suffering, that's why God used the suffering of his son to save the world. The world thinks that being born in a barn, being from Nazareth, having no place to rest your head are things to despise, and so God sent His Son into these very circumstances to save the world. The world thinks bread and wine are lowly elements, exactly so that, by his word and through faith God gives us salvation today in these things. The flesh of Christ is what gives us access to God. Come and receive, believe what he says with the eyes of faith, for as you approach him he delivers to you the salvation he promised.