
EVERYBODY CHEER

Did you enjoy the parade today?

- Our little processional reminds us of that entry JESUS made into Jerusalem.
- Obviously, it's not quite the same.
 - Still, it's the closest thing we, as a congregation, have.
- It's kind of like the homecoming parade in high school where the king (and the queen) are chosen.
 - Everybody greets the new king.
 - The pom poms are waved like we waved our palms.
 - And the cheerleading squad helps everybody cheer for the king.

When JESUS came, they didn't need cheerleaders.

- They had good reason to cheer and everyone knew it.
- In fact, let me talk about three reasons why the people of Jerusalem could cheer for the triumphal entry of JESUS.

1) JESUS had divine insight and power.

For example, JESUS showed HIS insight when HE told the disciples where to find the donkey and what to say to the owner.

- There was no advance reconnaissance.
 - JESUS just knew.
- HIS conversation with a Samaritan woman, telling her that HE knew she had had five husbands was another example.
- Or the need of the rich man to give all he had to the poor that would bring him closer to GOD.

Additionally, the stories of HIS power had preceded HIM so that everybody knew.

- HE had healed the sick, cast out demons, and even raised the dead.
- HE had walked on water, changed water into wine, and calmed storms.

JESUS had divine power and insight, so everybody cheered.

2) JESUS fulfilled the scriptural prophecies.

The Jewish Scriptures (which we call the Old Testament) told things about who the MESSIAH/SAVIOR/CHRIST would be.

- HE would be born in Bethlehem and be descended from King David.
- HE would come out of Egypt.
- HE would be from the town of Nazareth.
- And that HE would die hanging on a tree after extreme suffering.
 - Now one might be able to do the right things that would lead to a death that fulfills the Scriptures.
 - But it's impossible to plan your own birth...unless YOU were the MESSIAH.
- Another such prophecy was that the SAVIOR would come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey.
 - So, when JESUS came in this fashion, everybody cheered.

3) JESUS came as KING.

For decades, the Romans had controlled the land of the Jews.

- Scripture foretold of the ONE who would come to free them,
 - to restore GOD'S Kingdom.
- Who better than the ONE with divine insight?
- Who better than the ONE with supernatural power?
- Who better than the ONE who fulfilled all the prophecies?
 - This ONE, riding on a donkey.
 - This ONE, coming like a KING.
 - This ONE, JESUS, and everybody cheered.

But there were things they didn't understand and it's important that we do.

- It's crucial that we recognize that JESUS' Kingdom is not of this world.
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Some years ago, King Olaf of Norway was in the United States, and he had been invited to speak at graduation at Concordia College in Morehead, MN.

- Because the King was coming, many people beyond the college community and families came.
- There was a long processional of graduates and then the faculty, all wearing their academic robes that entered the field house where the graduation proceedings were taking place.
- That was followed by many dignitaries, most of whom were also wearing their academic robes.
 - Everyone was leaning forward to get the first glimpse of the king.

Finally, everyone had entered, with the most important up on the stage.

- But where was the king?
- Everyone was told to be seated, but no one was there wearing an ermine cloak and a crown.
 - Where was the king everyone had come to see?

The president of the college made some opening remarks, and then King Olaf of Norway was introduced.

- And when he stood up, everyone was shocked.
 - King Olaf was not wearing royal robes, but academic one like everyone else on stage.
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The people of Jerusalem were looking for a king...one particular kind of king.

- But they didn't recognize the kind of KING that JESUS was.
 - Perhaps this helps us understand why just a few days later they were calling for HIS death.

The people of Jerusalem didn't see what kind of KING JESUS was and is.

- But, on this side of the cross, we can.
 - So, let me tell you three reasons why we can cheer.

1) JESUS came into our world.

- Isn't that amazing?!
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A little boy was walking outside with his father when he accidentally stepped on an ant hill.

- The boy was tremendously upset as he saw the ants running around without direction, and some injured by his footstep.
 - "Oh, Daddy," he exclaimed. "I wish I could become an ant."
 - "I wish I could become one of them so I could tell them how I feel."
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JESUS came into our world to tell us how GOD feels.

- JESUS came to tell us how much GOD loves us...all of us.
 - JESUS came to show us that GOD forgives us...all of us.
 - JESUS came to free us from the religious rules and regulations that can control us, so that we can be free to focus on our relationship with GOD and with GOD'S people.
 - And for this reason, because JESUS came into our world, we can cheer.
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2) JESUS came as KING.

That's difficult for Americans to fully understand.

- We threw off monarchies and chose democracy for our country.
- When it comes to our leaders—mayors, governors, presidents—we, the people, get to choose.
 - Yet, JESUS chose us.

A king expects loyalty, obedience, and commands that taxes be paid to the king and conquest be done on the king's behalf.

- JESUS is a different kind of KING.
- This KING gives very different kinds of orders:
 - love one another;
 - serve one another;
 - forgive one another;
 - make disciples.

JESUS is a KING, but a very different kind of KING, so everybody cheer.

3) JESUS came to save.

In our world, we cheer for the one who wins.

- We look to the ones who have power, who live in the spotlight, who wield the wealth and prestige.

JESUS doesn't fit that mold.

- HE lost to those in charge.
- HE was labeled a criminal and executed.
- HE was humble and did not seek glory for HIMSELF.
- HE didn't claim power for HIMSELF, but gave it away to others.
- HE didn't expect to be served, but instead HE served others,
 - so that they might be saved and know that they are free and loved.

JESUS said there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for another.

- And then HE laid down HIS life for us, HIS friends.
- This week we will hear again, how this KING laid down HIS life and died,
 - for you; for me; for everyone.
- And then we will hear the best news of all,
 - that JESUS overcame even death and rose again,
 - so that we also, through faith, might live again.

JESUS came to save, and for this good news and the promises that it brings, everybody cheer!