

Grace and peace to you through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, Amen.

Entering Jerusalem, in word and deed,
Jesus is in control.

He has prophetic foreknowledge about
the location and availability of a donkey and a colt.
He confidently commandeers them for his purposes.

At Passover, pilgrims were expected to walk into the city.
No doubt Jesus' followers expected him to do exactly that,
since he always walked wherever he went.

This time, he chooses instead to ride the kind of colt a
king in a processional would ride,
one that had never before been ridden.

In so doing, he brings to realization the prophecy of Zechariah:
Your king, Jerusalem, comes to you triumphant,
riding on a colt (Zechariah 9:9).

Jesus rode into Jerusalem as a king, our king.

Appropriately, the people respond.

The disciples throw their cloaks onto the colt.

This draping is a makeshift throne.

The people that were crowded around Jesus follow the disciples' example,
jettisoning their cloaks onto the ground along with leafy branches,
they lay before him a makeshift red carpet.

And they sing Hosanna and celebrate the coming of their King.

Jesus *is* King.

But in an astonishing way.

We know, and he knows, that he is ultimately on his way to the cross.

His kingship, symbolized by his station upon a humble colt,
is one of sacrifice and service.

And yet, as Lord, he is not a helpless victim.

He is in charge.

He is working out God's plan in this demonstration of royal authority.

Even in the process of letting go of his life,
he is in charge of the liberation of God's people.
He puts our lives before his own life.

Our calling, having recognized Jesus' Lordship,
is to emulate his life.
To live our lives as he lived his,
in service to—and perhaps even in sacrifice for—
the lives of God's people.

We will soon be making our turn to the events of
Jesus betrayal, trial, suffering and death in the gospel of Matthew.
This week, is holy and sacred as we
remember and re-member ourselves as
followers of Jesus Christ and humans.

And, this week, we embrace the question:
Why did Jesus have to die?
For our sins, yes, but
did he really have to go all the way to death to pay for our sins?
In Jesus, God became truly human.
In Jesus, God was born the same way every other human was born.
In Jesus, the fully human God needed water and food and rest as
he taught, healed, gathered and sent those around him.

As humans, we are born, live and die.
Therefore, to defeat death, the fully human Jesus had to die.
What was fully human about Jesus died the same way we will die.
His body gave out, his heart stopped beating, his brain waves went flat,
and so, God in Jesus, experienced a wrenching separation
from the only body he had ever known as a human.

This is comforting to me.
That God knows this experience, our experience of death,
not figuratively, but literally.

I hope it is also comforting to you.

Today, with palms raised and shouts of Hosanna
we walk, fully human, with truly human, truly divine Jesus toward the cross.
On Maundy Thursday and Good Friday,
we immerse ourselves in Jesus' walk.
What does it mean for us that
truly human, truly divine God in Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday?
This is the question for us to hold this week.
Amen.