

The First Sunday of Advent (2017-18)

Mark 11:1–10 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"

In the Name of Jesus.

The King directed the disciples to fetch the horse; no one directed the people to bless Jesus as their King! 'Hosanna! Save us! You indeed save us! More than anyone ever expects!'

And so, the people of God live under Christ in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness! NOT because they, WE, have FINALLY found an accommodation with the LAW—the revelation from the FIRST TIME the Lord rent the heavens and came down, on Sinai, with fire and lightning, cloud and thick darkness. No! After His Crucifixion and Burial, the

Kind sent out the disciples to preach the Gospel to ALL NATIONS, PLEDGING: the one who is glad at MY reign and is baptized at My authority will be saved from the Law, and from all their phony accommodations! The one who is NOT glad at the reign of God's Kingdom by a King like Me, will be condemned when I return.

Dearly beloved of King Jesus, you and I are NOT prepared to welcome David's Son when He comes to us with His Body and His Blood—because we have taken note of Sinai, and the Law, and Moses, and all the imperatives of the Ten Commandments. Nope! The CONDEMNED boast of THAT! They do!

We are prepared to welcome Mary's Son as our Lord, our Redeemer, the One Who purchased us with His holy precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death—because HE has faced Sinai, and the Law, and Moses, and the imperatives of the Commandments!

AND...OUR...KING...DID...NOT...ONCE...ATTEMPT...TO...JUSTIFY...HIMSELF! He just took it; took it all! And He lived and died and rose and reigns, ALL based on the pledge made to HIM at HIS Baptism: 'Now, THAT'S My Boy! Well done!'

Then He was off to temptation, temptation all the way

to the cross! Can the one ‘well-pleasing’ to the Unseen, Living God, be so forsaken? That even His best and chiefest disciple denies He even knows the Man?! ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples—AND...PETER, no longer disciple, but **BE SURE TO TELL HIM!**—that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as He told you.’

The Old Covenant was nothing but a precursor and a pledge that the New Covenant was on the way! Animal after animal sacrificed to the threat of the Law, because the people could not answer to the Law’s demands. **THAT** was the faithfulness of Israel for which the Lord was looking! But instead of seeing one dead animal after another, substituted for them, and then concluding, in **JOY**, that there must be a **FINAL AND COMPLETE** substitution on the way—they instead concluded that **THEIR** righteous deeds of worship and behaving were something other than what the prophet declared them to be: filthy rags, a polluted garment.

Instead, they turned the **ADMISSION** of their guilt and sin into some sort of **BADGE** of honor!

But just as standing before the judge and saying, ‘Oh, you caught me! I’m **SORRY**, your honor!’—does **NOT**

justify and exempt you and me from guilt and condemnation, neither does that work with the Lord.

So that is our call to repentance today, my dear ones! Do YOU fall for this notion, that your religion somehow ELEVATES YOU over those who don't even do the bare minimum of practicing what WE preach? Do YOU conclude that YOUR orientation toward something—Jesus, the Bible, traditional morality, heaven, etc.—somehow takes the sting and power out of death and sin, the LAW?

Say 'yes!' For I don't want to be the only one here this morning admitting this!

I see the news and hear what we all hear, and my FIRST inclination, too often, MOST often, is to click the tongue and shake the head and roll the eyes—ALL things the superior and inferior did at the cross of our King!—and feel comforted in my better knowledge, insight, behavior.

Two examples:

Joseph and Murray!

Joseph married a teenager!

It's all the SAME THING! Those who are scrambling to get to the seat of power, to reign over us as our betters— ALL...THEY...KNOW, it so condemn behavior and excuse behavior, to JUSTIFY what YOU find WRONG with ME—and to PROVED what is WRONG with YOU!

‘It shall not be so among you, My disciples! Instead, He who would be the greatest must be your servant. And He who would be first, must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to BE served, but to serve; and to give His Life as a ransom for many!’

The people of Christ's Kingdom are not attractive. Even those who profess to being Christians FILL their calendars and events and lives and ears with those addicted to the Law, and devoted to excusing and condemning. But how much space and time and effort and love is granted to those who wait for the Lord's appearance at His Holy Supper?!

BETTER...NOT...GO...OVER...AN...HOUR,
PREACHER!

I chased after the words of ‘waiting’ in the Isaiah lesson today.

‘ON...A...STRING—TAUT—TIGHT.’

And even I will be saved!

For a man like ME, dear Christians, can even take the condemnation of the Law, and the torture and disposal of My King in shame—and yet hail THAT EVENT, and MY Baptism too, as the springboard and life-source to bless My God, your God, the God of All, for rending the heavens once again, and GIVING us His Son!

In the Name of Jesus! Amen!