

“Who is this King of Glory?”

Psalm 24; Matthew 21

Here we are at the gates of Jerusalem, voices raised in loud praise, awaiting the arrival of someone important, celebrating, rejoicing, dancing and singing: all for this King of Kings, this King of Glory. There is excitement in the air. There is expectation in the air. There is anticipation in the air.

From the reading in the Psalm, we feel and experience the power and the might of this King of Glory. With the chorus of “Lift up your Heads” ringing in our ears and reverberating in our minds, we imagine a battering ram banging on closed doors, demanding entrance, demanding access, demanding entry. The King wants in! The King who is mighty in battle wants in. The King who is strong wants in. The King who is the King of Glory, wants in!

Images of power and might flash in our minds. A king on a large war horse, with fire in his eyes, the horse stomping the ground in frustration, ready to charge. The king’s armor shining in the sun, his shield and his sword at the ready. The king surrounded by his soldiers, marching in procession. All at the ready, to process in, to conquer, to defeat, to triumph over his enemies.

Lift up your heads, people of Jerusalem! Throw open the gates. Welcome the King who is the long awaited Messiah! Welcome the King who will restore

God's people. Welcome the King who is the symbol of God's presence here on earth! Welcome the King who will overthrow the powers of the world and destroy those who oppress God's people.

Lift up your heads, o gates! The battering ram hits again. Bam!

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The King of Glory demands entrance into the gates. The King of Glory demands entry into the city. The King of Glory demands access to the city. The King of Glory, strong and mighty. The King of Glory, mighty in battle. Let him in! Welcome him! Let him in!

One can almost imagine the gates of Jerusalem being thrown open in fear, in awe, and in wonder. One can almost imagine the people standing there in anticipation and expectation. One can almost imagine the gates being thrown open to welcome the Messiah, God's anointed one, God's chosen one, God's selected one.

The procession begins in brilliant splendor. The King of Kings, the Lord of hosts, the King of glory comes riding through the gates of Jerusalem... on a simple humble donkey, with her colt following behind. No armor. No sword. No shield. No warhorse. No soldier. No power. No might.

The procession continues. Palm branches waving to greet him as his royal banners. Torn and dirty cloaks are spread before him as his royal carpet. Children surround him in laughter, singing his praises, as his royal trumpeters. Shouts of Hosanna, God save us fill the air as his royal anthem. His band of rag tag disciples following along behind as his royal guard.

And we are left wondering: Who is this King of Glory? Who is this Lord of hosts? Who is this King of Kings?

And then we begin to understand that over the last few weeks, the answer to this question has become clearer to us with each passing step, each step that takes us closer to Jerusalem. That throughout our journey of Lent, the answer to this question has become more and more obvious with each passing encounter with this man called Jesus. That even as we stand at the gates of Jerusalem, the answer to this question has become more and more evident especially when we look forward to the cross that awaits this man.

This King of Glory is the one we claim as Jesus Christ, the one we call “God with us”, the one whose very name means “God is salvation”, the one whom we have embrace as our personal Lord and Savior, the one who has given us eternal life.

we let this knowledge, this understanding of Jesus sink in, the Jesus we know and have experienced in our lives, the Jesus who is humble, peaceful, and

meekest, who welcomes the little children, who embraces the lost and the lonely and the images of power and might disappear. That's the Jesus that enters the gates of the city. That's the Jesus that brings in the Kingdom of God. That's the Jesus that is the King of Glory. That is the Jesus that we celebrate and welcome as our Messiah, the one who comes to restore the people of God, the one who comes to free the people of God, the one who comes to bring healing and wholeness to the people of God.

Because now we understand that once again, God has surprised us and has shattered our worldly expectations. Because now we understand that God is inviting us to truly look at this man with eyes of the Kingdom of God. Because now we understand that the same God who came to be with God's people, choosing to be born in a stable, lying in a manger, now has come in humility, in meekness, riding on a donkey, ushering in a new Kingdom, ushering in a new reign, ushering in a new establishment of God's presence among the God's people once more.

Because now we understand that as we welcome this King of Glory, the long awaited Messiah, we realize that he comes not in power and in might, but in blessing and in peace, not as a mighty warrior but as a herald of mercy and grace. That this King of Glory has come to set us free, not through violence or war, but

through an invitation to the table, through an acceptance offered to be seen as one of God's very own, through an embrace that brings us back to the fold.

Because now we realize that The King of Glory who calls us to lift up our heads is the one and the same King that can be found in the person that we have claimed as Jesus our Savior.

Who is this King of Glory? Jesus the Christ, the one who comes in peace, the one who is God's presence on earth made flesh, the one who invites us to be his followers.

Who is this King of Glory? Jesus the Christ, the one who invites us to experience the Kingdom of God here on earth, to experience the love and grace of God, to experience the good news that we are claimed and named as God's Beloveds.

Who is this King of Glory? The answer is quite clear this morning but as the week continues, we will find ourselves asking this question more and more, asking this question with each passing day and with each passing encounter with Jesus, asking this question as the cross gets closer and closer and the darkness threatens to overtake the light once more.

we will find ourselves wondering and questioning once again about who is this man, the one we know as the King of Glory? this King who defeated chaos and calmed the stormy seas, who will now allow himself to be turned over to an

angry mob, filled with violence and hate, who will respond to their actions by simply saying “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

who is this King of Glory that as he sits down with his disciples to a simple feast, he offers them the bread of new life and the cup of the new covenant, who tenderly washes their feet, who shows them what it means to be a servant, all the while knowing that one of his very own disciples will betray him for thirty pieces of silver.

who is this King of Glory that as he is being beaten, spit upon, and broken, that as he is given, not a crown made of gold, but a crown of thorns placed up his head does not speak out in anger or hate.

who is this King of Glory that as he is being mocked, wounded, and nailed to the cross, he tenderly looks upon his mother’s face and says to his beloved disciple, “here is your mother.”

who is this King of Glory that as he is dying he tells the thief beside that on this day he will be with him in paradise.

who is this King of Glory that as he draws his last breath, he says “It is finished.”

Who is this King of Glory?

May we have the courage to follow him, to experience him, to encounter him and the strength to found out just exactly who this King of Glory really is.

Amen.