

Worship Resources - Regime Change - <https://youtu.be/7svbKmUSBv0>

3rd Sunday in Lent, Year B,

7th March, 2021

Matthew 11:16-19,25-30 CEV / Zechariah 9:9-1 CEV

Prelude

Holy Ground

played by church musician Annie Center,

used and reported under CCLI Streaming License 20261246

https://youtu.be/cjfbWx0_9o8

Intro / Call to Worship

Come all who are weary of wealth, of poverty, of power, of struggle, of division
Come all who are heavy-laden with too much, with too little, with anxiety, with fear,
with anger

Come all who have hope for liberation, for peace, for freedom, for the kingdom

Hear these words "See, I am making all things new."

I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.

As we gather this third Sunday of Lent, we'll be looking at leadership, and what scripture says is the ideal ruler. As we listen to the following hymn, Ride On, Ride On, In Majesty, let's reflect on what we value in our rulers, and how are those characteristics are or are not mirrored in the image of Jesus portrayed in scripture.

Reflection Video

Winchester New-Ride On, Ride On, In Majesty,

text by Henry H Milman, posted to YouTube by mkariobangi

<https://youtu.be/VAh1lzSQ3>

Invocation

Father, Lord of heaven and earth, we gather in Your presence with thanksgiving and praise for the way in which You have revealed Yourself to us.

Through Jesus Christ, your Son, we have come to know and love You; we have seen Your love and mercy in action; we have caught a glimpse of Your heart, and we have heard the call to follow.

Continue to reveal Yourself to us as we worship. May Your Holy Spirit open our minds and hearts to Your presence here, and to the word that You have for us this morning. We long to meet You here, and to know You better.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Saviour.
Amen.

We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.

In our Gospel reading this morning, we hear Jesus giving us a glimpse of what following him looks like. As we listen to these words from Matthew, let's think about what that reveals about what leadership values God considers important.

Gospel reading Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30 CEV

You people are like children sitting in the market and shouting to each other, "We played the flute, but you would not dance! We sang a funeral song, but you would not mourn!"

John the Baptist did not go around eating and drinking, and you said, "That man has a demon in him!"

But the Son of Man goes around eating and drinking, and you say, "That man eats and drinks too much! He is even a friend of tax collectors^[a] and sinners." Yet Wisdom is shown to be right by what it does.

At that moment Jesus said: My Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I am grateful that you hid all this from wise and educated people and showed it to ordinary people.

Yes, Father, that is what pleased you.

My Father has given me everything, and he is the only one who knows the Son. The only one who truly knows the Father is the Son. But the Son wants to tell others about the Father, so that they can know him too.

If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest.

Take the yoke^[a] I give you. Put it on your shoulders and learn from me. I am gentle and humble, and you will find rest.

This yoke is easy to bear, and this burden is light.

Scripture Video

Matthew 11:16-19,25-30

Come To Me And Rest

Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/9smtEcAaegc>

A Time of Prayer

Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: vicarglenn@gmail.com, and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.

Joys and Concerns

This morning, let's continue to keep Betty and George DeBon in our prayers as Betty recovers from a broken leg, George seeks relief from hip pain, and they both adjust to a new living arrangement.

We also can take joy in Kiausherae's new retail employment and ask for God's help in helping her hone the skills she needs for that new job. We also ask for prayers for her cousin who has suffered with drug problems and recently was shot and needed surgery.

We express joy in the progress made in the cancer treatment for Sylvia's sister-in-law and seek God's continued healing to provide the strength she needs to take the next round of treatment.

I can also express joy in the fact that my mother has finally managed to get scheduled for her first COVID vaccination this coming Monday after trying for some time in vain.

Let's bring these concerns and others in our lives to God together in prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

Creator God, we come before you asking prayers for those who lead nations, cities. Churches and homes.

As you poured out your love in the Word may we hear your word and follow; may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts lead us to you.

Holy One, we come before you - a people broken into shards of lives, sick, poor, Hungry, hidden by the limitations of our eyes.

Help us to see as You see as you poured out your love in the Word. May we hear your word and follow may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts lead us to you.

God of Mercy, we come before you – seeking to live as you command, but often failing, and thus we are torn by cries of despair, anger, power, control, lost to foolishness and stumbling blocks despite your love in the Word

Help us to hear your word and follow May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts lead us to you.

Gentle God, we come before you giving thanks for all our blessings the gift of life, Hope, faith, love, family, friends, all we care for this day. Help us to be Your hands.

Incline Your heart, O gracious God, and teach us to love O Christ, our rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

In our prophetic reading today we hear Zechariah sharing God’s image of what the hope and promise of the coming messiah would be. As we listen to these words, let’s think about what we value in rulers, and how does that contrast with the values God presents.

Words of the Prophet Zechariah 9:9-12 CEV

Everyone in Jerusalem, celebrate and shout! Your king has won a victory, and he is coming to you. He is humble and rides on a donkey; he comes on the colt of a donkey.

I, the Lord, will take away war chariots and horses from Israel^[a] and Jerusalem. Bows that were made for battle will be broken. I will bring peace to nations, and your king will rule from sea to sea. His kingdom will reach from the Euphrates River across the earth.

When I made a sacred agreement with you, my people, we sealed it with blood.^[b] Now some of you are captives in waterless pits, but I will come to your rescue

and offer you hope. Return to your fortress, because today I will reward you with twice what you had

Scripture Videos

Zechariah 9:9-12

The Lord Tells About The Coming King

Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/OBYWoSs3Pmc>

Message *Regime Change*

Leadership has been a very popular topic over the last year, hasn't it? With one of the most contentious elections in our country's history playing out last year, our interactions with each other often could become very heated and energetic, whether with those we disagreed with, or even among those on the "same side." Much of the debate focused largely on what we considered valuable in a leader, and what values we held to be important. Now we're on the other side of the election results, and many of us look hopefully to the new administration to follow what we value. Yet, for many of us, already we see signs that some things are not going to change as much as we'd like. Can we reconcile what we value with following leaders who don't always follow the same standards as we do? Or what about if the values we are looking for don't exactly match the ideal values presented in our faith texts?

Our text from Zechariah this week presents a leader much different than what the ancient Israelites expected. This passage is part of a gradual development of the messianic expectation in Judaism that occurred largely after the exile period in Babylon. Prior to that time, the concept of a messiah figure did not figure into Jewish theology. Living in exile led many to yearn for someone divinely ordained to rescue them from the oppression they faced, and the writings of the later prophets represent the promise of that yearning being fulfilled. Yet the savior they sought does not necessarily meet the expectations they had.

This Davidic king to come has three important characteristics that distinguish him from other rulers. First, he is one who rules in righteousness and justice; as such, the messianic king holds within him the hope of an oppressed people. Second, he is saved by God; in other words, he rules with God's help and does not rely only on his own strength or pedigree. Third, he is gentle (or humble), not proud and boastful. The latter characteristic of the messianic king seems to be underlined by the fact that he is riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey. We often read this text on Palm Sunday because of this imagery. The donkey is indeed a humble animal, but its real significance lies in the fact that it is associated with the business of life rather than the business of death. It is the animal used on the farm to help in the production of food and in the town to carry people and goods. It is the very antithesis of the horse, at that time largely used for war, The colt therefore symbolizes the very acts that the messianic king is to perform, according to Zechariah: taking away the chariots and warhorses and breaking the battle bows. His arrival and the mode of his arrival announce the end of war and the beginning of universal peace under his rule.

The vision of the messianic king is rooted in the history of God's people and takes this history to its logical conclusion by ruling in dependence on God. He brings God's peace instead of man's war. He is therefore as much unlike the kings of the past as he is like them, Indeed, he is God's "own man," and as such God is the true ruler of the messianic kingdom.

For some, the militaristic language of Zechariah presents a struggle, for others, it embodies their experience of triumph. A careful read, however, will note the reversals of power

presented in the passage. It is not the powerful might of the chariot and the warhorse that prevails, but the humble one on not just a donkey but the foal of a donkey. Triumph and victory are not glorifications of the battle bow, but are instead the context for peace to reign. Of course Christian eyes cannot but see Jesus on that foal, riding into Jerusalem. For the ancient Israelites living under oppression exiled in Babylon, this image of redemption offered hope in the depths of despair. As Zechariah's prediction of double the reward, those suffering in bondage have the dual promise of redemption not only in this life, but in death as well. But it is not one that comes with great power and prestige, full of pride and grandeur, but one of humble servitude. One that offers a quiet, simple assurance.

Shortly after the destruction on 9/11 of the Twin Towers in New York City, an AP photographer shared his experience of covering the disaster and the subsequent rescue efforts. He was working the scene and trying to capture images for the nation. He tried his best to stay objective, but it was still a tragedy painfully fresh, and objectivity was simply not possible. Throughout that first week, everyone at Ground Zero was a prisoner to hope, praying that someone might be found alive. As the days passed and that hope faded, the photographer found it harder and harder to capture images of the rescue workers. One afternoon of another cloudless day, as he walked down the sidewalk in what had once been the shadows of the towers, he glanced down. There, in the crack of the sidewalk, a dandelion poked its way into the new light. It was not anything spectacular. In fact, the image itself was quite humble. With the roar of the machines and the shouts of the rescuers only a few feet away, the photographer fell to his knees and burst into tears at the realization that life, even in such a place as this, will persist. Amid the emerging nationalistic fervor that swept the United States into seemingly never-ending war, one man found a glimpse of hopeful promise in a weed in the sidewalk.

Where do we seek to find our hope? Is it in the leaders of empires and the influence of the "powerful," or is it in the simple promise of the humble? The ruler God promises in Zechariah is not a king, a prime minister, or president. Nor is that leader a military or popular culture hero. He is a simple, humble man on a donkey colt. One whose greatness is measured in service and sacrifice. One who calls us to follow, to put on his yolk, which is much lighter and easier to bear than those of the rulers we would choose of this world.

God ushers in a regime change, a way of ruling and leadership that is radically different than what we expect those we follow in the governments and structures we devise. The invitation we have is to join that revolution, to embody those humble values of servitude in our own lives, and together as a community of faith. We are to be the dandelions sprouting through the cracks in the rubble, the promise of new life, in this world and beyond. As we continue to live in the exile of our time, this is the hope offered to us, and the hope we can share with those around us. Renewal will come. There is a God who offers us salvation and a humble savior who will prevail against the violence of the powers of this world, in however it manifests itself.

Will we choose to follow the old ways or seek to find and follow the new regime manifesting itself around us, the kin-dom that is always drawing near. I hope and pray we all embrace the hope we find in the messianic promise of Christ, and seek to embody that hope to all we encounter. Amen.

Call to Serve.

As we continue to seek to be a place of compassion and support to our community, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry that seeks to promote the growth of God's shalom around us. Today, as Annie shares the following song, let's give some thought...

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [Video]

There Is A Redeemer,

music by Melody Green,

arr. By Phillip Keveren,

played by church musician Annie Center,

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<https://youtu.be/c07Hsp0nMNs>

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Receive these gifts, Holy One, sanctify them by your Spirit. Drive away any ill motives and accept, we pray, our humble offering. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

So now we leave this space of worship. And while so much of the road ahead is uncertain, the path constantly changing, we know some things that are as solid and sure as the ground beneath our feet, and the sky above our heads.

We know God is love. We know Christ's light endures.

We know the Holy Spirit this there, found in the space between all things, closer to us than our next breath, binding us to each other, until we meet we again,

Go in peace.

As we extinguish this candle, carry its divine spark into your lives this week, sharing God's love and light with all you encounter. Amen.

Postlude *Here I am, Lord*

music by Daniel Schutte,
arr. By Michael Popi, SJ, and John Weissrock,
performed by church musician Annie Center,

https://youtu.be/4G_9dbLlxoU