“SEE, YOUR KING COMES TO YOU”

Matthew 21:1-22

Key verse: 5

**“Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”**

In chapter 21 of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus entered Jerusalem as the promised Messiah, Israel’s King. Through this event, Jesus revealed what kind of King he is and how he would rule his people. Jesus’ kingship and authority are spiritual in nature. Jesus came to destroy invisible enemies: sin, death and the Satan. Jesus defeats these enemies completely through his death and resurrection. May we understand the nature of Jesus’ kingship in our hearts and acknowledge his reign in our practical lives.

1.Jesus is a gentle and humble king (1-11)

In the previous passage, when Jesus was leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Jesus had been traveling with his disciples from Jericho to Jerusalem. It was about 30 km distance climbing upward about 1,000 meter. This uphill road reached to the Mount of Olives and suddenly into the full sight of Jerusalem. It was Sunday, the start of Passover Week and many pilgrims were also traveling on this road to Jerusalem.

Now Jesus came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus prepared to enter Jerusalem by sending two disciples with instructions. Look at verses 2,3 **“saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you and at once you will find a donkey tied there with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them and he will send them right away.”’** Jesus never asked his disciples this kind of unethical instructions which was taking other’s belonging. At that time, donkey was a valuable possession for transportation like cars these days.

The disciple wished that the owner of donkeys would not say anything. However donkeys’ owners asked them while untying the donkeys according to Luke’s gospel **“Why are you untying the colt?”** Then it must have made them break out in cold sweat. The disciples just answered according to Jesus’ instruction, saying **“The Lord need them.”** Then the owner let them go without further questions.When Jesus’ disciples obeyed Jesus’ instructions, it took place just as Jesus said it would be. One of the natures of a donkey is its stubbornness. However, as soon as the disciples announced, “The Lord need them”, stubborn donkeys became so calm and followed the disciples without any resistance. The donkey did not run away from the disciples or uncontrollable while dragging them to Jesus.

So far, Jesus called himself as “The Son of Man.” This is the only time that Jesus called himself “**The Lord**.” The word, “Lord” is in Hebrew word **Adonai.** It is translated as **Kyrios** in Greek version. The meaning is that a person exercising absolute ownership right and the possessor and disposer of a thing. This teaching shows us Jesus’ omniscience and lordship. Jesus knows everything and is the owner of everything. All things belong to Jesus. We are just stewards of what he has given us for instance, our lives, possessions, time, children, health, materials, abilities and so forth. All these things are entrusted to us for a time being on earth as stewards. Jesus is the Lord of all creation for he is God. We need to offer what we have for Jesus’ purpose.

Why did Jesus need donkeys? Look at verse 4. **“This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:”** This is the quotation from the prophecy of Zechariah which was written around 480 B.C. Zechariah 9:9,10b say, **“Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.”**

Ancient kings entered their palaces riding on a horse with mighty armies and soldiers displaying their power and authority. However, Jesus’ entry was riding on a colt and country boy disciples were surrounding him. What a stark contrast! This revealed the nature of Jesus’ kingship which was spiritual different from that of worldly kings. Jesus was not a warrior king. Jesus did not come to break people and rule them by force. He rules as a shepherd who nurtures, protects and guides his people. The coming of Jesus was marked in humility and gentleness. He came in peace to save and give life, to rule men’s hearts in righteousness and peace. Sometimes, we feel that our life journey is tiresome, burdensome and weary. However, Jesus, our humble king promised in Matthew 11:29-30, **“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls.** **For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”**

A very large crowd gathered. As they realized who was coming, they spread their cloaks on the road. Some cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. It was their best expression of welcoming Jesus with reverence and honor. Soon, sounds of praise began to rise. The crowds that went ahead of him and those who followed shouted, verse 9b states, **“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!** The crowd were so happy and they started shouting. Hosanna means “**Save us now”**(Ps 118:25-26). Hosanna was a people’s cry for deliverance and for help in the day of their trouble. This revealed their longing for emancipation from their oppressors.

Jesus’ coming as the Son of David was what God’s people had been waiting for so long. Jesus came as the long waited Savior. In fact, the Israelites longed for political and economic freedom, but Jesus came to free his people from sin and death. Matthew 1:21b says, **“He will save his people from their sins.”** Jesus was entering Jerusalem as King to become our Savior. He would suffer and die on a shameful cross and shed all his blood to give us God’s forgiveness and salvation.

The prophet proclaims, “**See your king comes to you**.” “Behold, your king comes to you!(NKJV) Often times, we are distracted by the things of the world and petty things losing sight of our Lord. But we need to gaze upon our king Jesus’ coming and ponder upon his gentleness. He is approachable by everyone. Let us welcome Jesus as our personal king and let him rule our lives. All we need to do is to look up at Jesus and accept Him as our King.

Here is a story of M.Daniel Jeong, Tokyo in Japan. When he was young, he had a younger brother who was mentally handicapped. He became fatalistic seeing her suffering mother’s tears who was taking care of 13 family members and her sick son. He developed a habit of doing everything at a slow pace to avoid running errands from parents and uncles. He suffered from jaundice due to malnutrition. He tried to study but ended up sitting on a bench lying down due to fatigued body. But through an invitation to a bible study, he heard Jesus’ word in Matthew 11:29, **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”** Matthew 12:20 **“A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory.”** His body wasn’t healthy and he was burned out. He was not doing well in his studies. He felt hopeless about himself. But Jesus invited him, a burden person with compassion. Jesus gave him hope. He was wounded, but became hopeful in Jesus. He regained health and receive a new life full of hope. Then he went out as a missionary to Japan seeking God’s kingdom and His righteousness first. He has been serving campus ministry at Waseda university in Tokyo UBF while teaching fun math in the middle school. He lives as a blessing to many following Abraham’s footsteps. When humble and gentle Jesus took care of him, he who was like dead person began to be alive and gradually transformed as an useful and powerful man of God. Jesus did not give him up, instead helped him to the end until he became well. We praise Jesus, our humble and gentle king.

Yes! Our gentle and humble king comes to save us from our sins and weaknesses. Once we were like bruised reeds and smoldering wicks. However, Jesus came and revived us. May we humbly accept his rule in our heart and church.

2. Jesus is a righteous king (12-22)

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, how did the city respond? The whole city was stirred and asked, **“Who is this?”** These people were so shaken by Jesus’ entering as King because they were not ready for him. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, where did Jesus go first? Look at verse 12a. **“Jesus entered the temple courts.”** Upon arrival in Jerusalem, the first place Jesus went was the temple courts. This was the place set apart for Gentiles to come and pray. To our King Jesus, worship was at the heart of spiritual life. It seemed that many people were at the temple worshipping God. But Jesus could see the spiritual reality through it all. God’s people had turned this precious place into a market place.

The merchants sold sacrificial animals at high price taking advantage of those who had come long distances. There were people changing money into the local currencies. Often times, money changers deceived foreigners who did not know exchanging rates. The temple area had become a big animal market. The temple court was filled with the sound of animal’s crying and money changing. Jesus drove out all those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. Jesus is not only gentle and humble king, but also a righteous King. Jesus used his divine authority to honor God and to fulfill God’s purpose at the temple court. Jesus cleared the temple court.

Look at verse 13, **“It is written, he said to them, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’”**

God established the temple as a place to worship, listen to His word, receive the forgiveness of sins and pray. Through this fellowship with God, their souls could revive. Jesus challenged them with the word of God to repent and use the temple for God’s purpose. God’s house is a place of prayer. Fear of God and reverence for him should mark our attitude and conduct in God’s house. God’s house can be our church building, but it also means our own bodies. **1 Corinthians 3:16-17 say, “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred and you together are that temple.”**

When the spiritual atmosphere of the temple was restored, many blind and lame people came to Jesus there. Jesus healed them. This validated Jesus as the promised Messiah. These healing works were testaments to his identity. Isaiah 35:5 says, **“Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a dear and the mute tongue shout for joy.”** Isaiah foresaw the works of the Messiah that Jesus would perform in the temple. Matthew called it wonderful things done by Jesus at the temple court.

Many people were praising God including the little children who had followed Jesus into the temple. However, the chief priests and the teacher of the law were indignant. They asked Jesus, “Do you hear what these children are saying?” Jesus said to them, **“Yes, have you never read, ‘From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise?”** Jesus quoted God’s prophecy from Psalm 8:2. Children’ welcoming songs and shouts fulfilled scripture. Jesus identified himself as the Lord who is worthy to receive praise. Jesus defended those who praised him as children of God. He left there and went out of the city to Bethany where he spent the night.

When we come to God’s house, we should put aside all other issues and concerns and really pray to God, to listen to his word and seek his face. And also our heart temple must be purified with Jesus’ blood and filled with unceasing prayer sound. We should fill our heart with God’s word and His Spirit. And we need to make our Bible students and children’s heart clean through teaching them God’s word diligently.

Look at verses 18-19. **“Early in the morning as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, ‘May you never bear fruit again!’ Immediately the tree withered.’”** Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? This was not a thoughtless act but an acted out parable. There was a deeper meaning in it. Jesus saw this fig tree as a symbol of the nation Israel. God gave the Israelites all the spiritual privileges and blessings to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. But they used these blessings for their own benefit. The nation Israel had the verdant foliage of religious life. But in fact they were not producing any real spiritual fruit. Jesus’ curse of the fig tree foreshadowed God’s divine judgment. The disciples noticed this and they were amazed. They asked Jesus how the fig tree could have withered so quickly.

Jesus replied in verses 21-22, **“Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”** Jesus taught them how to have living faith, faith that moves mountains. Jesus wanted his disciples to experience his power in even greater ways that he had demonstrated. Jesus challenged his disciples to have faith of moving mountains. Jesus also challenges us to have faith that prays and to experience a miracle of God’s mighty power.

This power comes through faith in God. It comes from God alone through prayer based on his will. This mountain does not indicate Blue mountain or Mount Everest, rather humanly impossible tasks or problems. What kind of mountains do you face? We have mountains in our own heart like our chronic ailment, school studies, sinful desires, unchanged nature and fear of tomorrow. We also have mountains of raising disciples of Jesus in UTSC campus and raising our children as godly. Jesus said, “**If you have faith and do not doubt**” and “**If you believe**.” We need to have faith in God. As we serve God’s work, we believe that God can use even weak people like us to challenge mountain like problems of life.

Dr.Samuel Lee defined mountain moving faith as follows. He would roll up his sleeves and go to the foot of the mountain. He would dig out a handful of soils with his bare hands and begins move it to the other side. His work and effort are so puny compared to the gigantic mountain. But as he does this by faith in God, eventually he will see the mountain moved by God’s power. May we have faith as small as a mustard seed and experience God’s power in our real life. When we confront immovable mountains, instead of being shrunk, we should command saying, “You mountains, go throw yourself into the sea!” Today we learned that Jesus is our gentle and humble king. At the same time, Jesus is the righteous king. May we honor him with reverence and let him rule over our heart, family and church. May we also face challenges of life with mountain moving faith and win many victories.