

The title for today's message is: **"The Lord has need of it."**

Jesus said: ***"Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat."***

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Advent isn't merely a time to get ready for Christmas, but a time in which the Church prepares to meet the heavenly bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ,

Reflecting upon His promised coming to the Saints of the Old Testament, He contemplates the wonder of His first Advent in crib and cross.

He rejoices in His continual Advent through His Holy Word and Sacrament, and anticipates His Second Advent at the end of time.

Advent is appropriate to new beginnings. The season singles not only the start of a new liturgical calendar.

But themes of Repentance, that is, newness of life. A time where the people of God experience new beginnings.

Through contrition and faith, all believers receive a new mind, a new heart, and a new life, all created in and through Jesus Christ.

Now, in today's gospel, the Church stands shoulder to shoulder with the pilgrims as Jesus enters into Jerusalem for the last time.

As He entered into Jerusalem, so He enters into His Church today, not to suffer and die, but to forgive and restore.

St. Luke's Gospel builds toward its climax, that is, the cross, as Jesus approaches closer, and closer, to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

He alerts His disciples to His impending death at the hands of the Gentiles. Now in Jericho Jesus is acclaimed by a admiring crowd.

There, Jesus brings salvation to a notorious public sinner by the name of (Za-k-us) Zacchaeus. Jesus said to him; ***"Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."***

Hearing this, the disciples mistakenly assume that the Kingdom of God will "appear immediately".

But Jesus quickly corrects the disciples, when He tells them the parable of the ten minas.

Through the parable Jesus teaches them that His Kingdom will be ushered in, in its fullness, and only upon His return.

The parable finishes with a strong warning of the final judgment. Jesus said: ***"But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me."***

Here Jesus was speaking about the final judgment day, when He said: ***"bring them here and slaughter them before me."***

And after saying this, Jesus then continues His relentless journey to the cross in Jerusalem.

I know, if you didn't know better, you might think we've gone on fast-forward today, and jumped ahead to Palm Sunday.

Yet here it is just the first Sunday in Advent, I mean, we haven't even trimmed our Christmas trees yet.

We seem to have skipped over baby Jesus, and the manger, and the Wise Men, and gone directly to the streets of Jerusalem, thirty three years later.

Where the followers of Jesus, lay palm branches on the road and watch Jesus ride past on a donkey, entering Jerusalem where He would soon be crucified.

I don't now, what do you think? Did we miss something here? Doesn't Advent lead to our Lord's birth, not His death.

Well, yes, and no. You see the first Sunday in Advent directs the attention of the church to the final chapter in the saga of salvation.

And that's as it should be. For the crib and the cross go together. In fact you can't have one, without the other.

As the angel said to the shepherds who were in the field the night of our Lord's birth.

The angel said: ***Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.***

This astounding little bundle of Joy was born for one reason only, to save us all from the penalty of death, by and through his own death.

Another words, Jesus was born to die, to lay down His life in payment for the sins of all people, past, present and in the future.

Look, there is no salvation apart from God in the flesh. It wasn't simply a heavenly principle, or abstract love, that was put to death, No!

Jesus was true man. However, by the grace of God, He was raised again from the grave, so that you and I can now live.

And not just so He could live again, but for our justification, a real man, with flesh and blood, just like ours.

He remove the penalty for our sin, by taking on a human body, born of a woman, and under the law, to redeem us who are under the law.

So that we may be adopted by God, as His sons and daughters. Yes crib and cross, cross and crib. You can't have one without the other.

So, today, before we re-live that magnificent story of our Lord's birth in this new Church year, we peek ahead, to the final scene.

Jesus knew where He was going, and He told His disciples just that. He told them they were going to Jerusalem.

But more importantly, He said: ***everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him***

And as we heard in our Gospel lesson, Luke said: ***When he (meaning Jesus) drew near to Bethpage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples,***

Jesus told the two disciples: ***“Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’”***

Jesus was planning a dramatic entrance into Jerusalem. He was going to make sure everyone in Jerusalem knew He had arrived.

So, the appointed disciples, that were to acquire this colt, went out to the town and did in fact find at the edge of town the colt Jesus spoke of.

By this, Jesus fulfilled prophecy, by setting the prophetic model of the promised Messiah.

Look, this whole scene, of the triumphal entry, with all the people bowing down to Jesus as He entered Jerusalem, must have confused His disciples.

They already couldn't understand why anyone would arrest Him and put Him to death on a cross, simply to rise again.

But Jesus didn't try, or intend to confuse the disciples, these things had to happen, Jesus was only fulfilling His Father's will.

He knew He had to suffer a great deal, by way of rejection, and physical punishment, and to die a horrible death. But also to be raised from the grave.

He was completely aware that He was to die as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Defeating death itself, releasing us from the bondage of sin.

Still yet, it wasn't the glory His disciples, and followers had in mind. They were still expecting a king who would take over as king of the Jews.

However, for Jesus, His road to glory would have to pass through the cross. Not exactly what the disciples expected or wanted to believe.

This was Jesus' path, and this is also the path for all Christians today. Luke wrote in Acts chapter 14: ***strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,"***

Yes, the adoring crowds acclaimed Jesus as "The King who comes in the name of the Lord.

However, by weeks end, the man they held up as King, would be dead, the victim of their and our sins.

With His sacrifice He broke the bonds of sin, bringing peace and forgiveness to the earth, as well as in heaven.

I heard someone say once, what I think makes all the sense in the world, he said: Jesus came down from heaven to join God to man.

And His resurrection, and His ascension, was to join man to God. You know, Just thinking of this brings tears to my eyes.

Jesus brought peace on earth, by shedding His blood on the cross, as well as bringing peace to heaven, in the presence of God.

And today my friends, Jesus is present in and through His Word to release sinners like you, and me, from our sins.

Jesus comes among us, and gives us peace in a dark world. He comes where His Gospel is preached, and where His sacraments are administered.

He brings God's peace down to us from heaven, while at the same time, He makes peace for us before God in heaven.

We acclaim Jesus, who comes in the name of the Lord, and we bless His holy name as we depart in His peace, to serve Him, and our neighbors all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In closing, we give thanks to God, because of Him, we too, are bound for Glory.

We say; "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest."

How else are we to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, but by first celebrating what He has done for all mankind.

And to think, all these blessed things, coming from a little baby boy, wrapped in rags, laying in a stinky, dirty, animal corral.

And the angel said: ***"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.***

Amen

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.