

## Sermon for Palm Sunday

**Date:** March 29, 2026

**Location:** Zion – Colby, WI

**Old Testament:** Zechariah 9:9–12

**Epistle Reading:** Philippians 2:5–11

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 21:1–11

**Sermon Series:** Hope in the Dark

**Sermon Title:** He Goes On Ahead of Us

**Sermon Text:** Matthew 21:1–11



### Hymns:

LSB 866 – Lord Jesus Christ, the Children’s Friend (v.1,3,4,6)

LSB 439 – O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken (v. 12)

LSB 693 – O Holy Spirit, Grant Us Grace (v.1,3)

LSB 430 – My Song Is Love Unknown (v.1,6,7)

### Distribution:

LSB 441 – Ride On, Ride On in Majesty

LSB 536 – Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness

LSB 442 – All Glory, Laud, and Honor

LSB 431 – Not All the Blood of Beasts

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## Text: Matthew 21:1–11

<sup>1</sup>Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” <sup>4</sup>This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

<sup>5</sup>“Say to the daughter of Zion,  
Behold, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.”

<sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. <sup>7</sup>They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup>Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” <sup>10</sup>And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” <sup>11</sup>And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

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Grace, peace and mercy to you, in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

## Where We Left Off

Lent has taught us how to live when God feels far away. Week after week, we learned to sing in the night, to pray when answers did not come quickly, to wait when resolution stayed out of reach, to trust God's promises even when clarity did not arrive.

Today marks a shift. The night does not end yet. But the road becomes clearly visible. Palm Sunday stands as a hinge. We are no longer only waiting. We are now watching Jesus move. The songs of Lent haven't stopped. They are about to change key.



## A King Who Chooses the Road

Matthew's recording of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem as deliberate in its pacing. Jesus doesn't happenstancially wander into the moment. He arranges it. He sends disciples ahead. He specifies the animal. He tells them what to say. Nothing is rushed. Nothing is accidental.



This matters. Jesus does not stumble to the cross. He walks toward it purposefully. The King who arrives on a donkey is not improvising. He is obeying. The prophecy from Zechariah is not being fulfilled by chance. It is being carried out by intention. The humility is chosen. The path is chosen.

## The Crowd Knows the Song, Not the Road

The crowd responds the only way they know how. Cloaks fall to the road. Palms are raised. Hosanna fills the air. They are hopeful. They sing the right words. They expect now is the time God will show up. But they expect the wrong outcome. They know the song. They do not yet know the road.

They want a king who fixes things quickly. A king who restores order. A king who brings relief. Jesus lets them sing, but He keeps moving.

## He Knows Where This Leads

Jesus knows what waits beyond the city gates. He knows the traps that will be set for Him. He knows the garden and the pitch darkness He will experience there. He knows the traitor lies in wait. He knows denial will come before the rooster crows. He knows the crowds will thin, then vanish. Still, He enters.

Scripture says He set His face toward Jerusalem. With resolve. Knowing fully what waited for Him. Victory begins here, not with a throne, with submission.



## When the Cheers Fade

This is where the World presses in on us. We follow gladly when faith feels triumphant. We sing easily when hope rings eternal. It is when obedience narrows and darkens the road that we grow quiet. When faith costs something, silence feels safer than confession.



Later in the week the disciples scatter. Not because they stop loving Jesus. Fear simply spoke to their souls louder than courage. I'm sure most anyone here can recall a moment like it for yourself. When you could have, or should have, spoke and didn't.

We step back. We hesitate when the road grows costly. We prefer songs of celebration without the suffering it sometimes costs.

## He Goes On Ahead of Us

Jesus doesn't wait for our courage. He doesn't turn back even when He must walk the road alone. He trudges on ahead of us. He has set His face toward Jerusalem. He is determined to save you. He will do it.

He walks into betrayal so forgiveness can be spoken. He walks into silence so mercy can be declared. He walks into death so life eternal can be yours. His obedience stands where ours collapses. His faithfulness carries what we cannot.

By His obedience, many are made righteous. By His cross, salvation is accomplished. By His resolve, the night is pierced with the sword of light.



## Lenten Hymn: O Dearest Jesus

The hymn continues to teach us and carry us through:

I'll think upon Thy mercy without ceasing,  
That earth's vain joys to me no more be pleasing;  
To do Thy will shall be my sole endeavor  
Henceforth forever.

## The Invitation into Holy Week

Palm Sunday is the last flash of triumph we will see until Jesus is on the cross. There a flash of light will spark in that dark Friday afternoon. It will come in three words. For most it will not be seen for three days, but it did flash there. "It is finished!"

Today the palms fall. The new Table waits. The cross rises into view. The invitation for you now is simple:

Dine Thursday  
Watch Friday  
Wait in silence  
Watch what God is doing with this dark hour.

Our King keeps walking.

Amen.



Proclaiming God's Word  
Encouraging one another in faith  
Witnessing to God's love  
Serving all people



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Warm, Friendly, Inviting.  
Everyone is welcome.