

Palm Sunday 2020

“BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SITTING ON A DONKEY’S COLT!”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

Across the valley of Elah, the Philistines stood on the mountain on one side and the Israelites on the other. For forty days, the champion of the Philistines, Goliath, stood and taunted the Israelites every morning and evening. Goliath was a giant of a man, standing over 9 feet tall. His armor alone, not even counting his helmet or weapons, weighed 125 pounds. The Bible simply tells us, “When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid (1 Sa 17:11).”

Then stepped forward the youngest of Jesse’s sons, David, the shepherd boy and spoke, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? ... Let no man’s heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine”. “When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him...and said, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” “Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel’”. David ran quickly to the battle line to meet the treaded giant, put a stone into his sling, slung it and struck the giant’s forehead. “So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him” the Bible tells us (cf. 1 Sa 17:26, 43, 45-46, 50).

Today, Palm Sunday, we see our King David riding to defeat our Goliath. Dear Children of God, as important and decisive as this battle of David was for the earthly freedom of all Israel, so important and decisive

was the battle of Christ with the devil for the eternal salvation of all men.

You know how those Israelites felt, don't you? You know how they felt because our Goliath, Satan, taunts us, doesn't he?

Our Goliath Satan taunts us, "If God really loved you..." "If God really loved you, He would not all this Coronavirus to plague you and your neighbors. If your God really loved you, if He really cared about you, you would not be so anxious and fearful and worried about this pandemic threatening you and your loved ones. If God really loved and cared for you, you would not be sick; your loved one would not be hospitalized."

As he whispered to Eve, our Goliath taunts you with his whispered lies, "Did God really say..." Did God really say He would open His Fatherly hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing, even when you are laid off from your job, even when you have no paycheck to cover rent and mortgage payment, to pay for groceries and medicine.

If that were not bad enough, our Goliath Satan taunts you, "Remember when you..." "Remember when you sinned." "Remember when you did that. God could never love someone who would do such a thing. God will never forgive you for doing such a vile thing."

On hearing the whispered taunts of the evil foe, we are dismayed and greatly afraid.

See, Dear Saints of God, this Palm Sunday, Jesus comes forward, the real David of Bethlehem, to fight and triumph over our accuser and adversary.

Just as David fought for all the Israelites, so our David, Christ Jesus, fights as our Substitute, for the whole human race, for all people, for **you**, Dear Child of God. Satan held us in bondage and slavery through sin. When God wanted to redeem and save us poor sinners, He came in

humble meekness, in servant's form, to conquer Satan, to destroy his kingdom of darkness, to free us from his sinister power, and to lead us through the kingdom of grace into the kingdom of everlasting blessedness.

The first promise of Christ was to our first parents, in paradise, after the father of all lies had led them into sin. God spoke, "The Seed of woman," that is, Christ, the Son of the Virgin, "will crush the head of the serpent," that is, the devil (cf. Ge 3:15). Through Christ's bloody death on the cross, the serpent's head was totally crushed, and you are redeemed from all sin, death, and the devil.

This is what the book of Hebrews teaches us,

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, [Jesus] Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery (2:14ff).

Our King David came in the name of the Lord to enter into battle with the old evil foe and triumph over him. Now, our King comes to us, in humility, to give us His triumph over the devil to be our very own; He comes to rule and reign in our hearts; He comes to us to bear our burdens and carry our sorrows. He brings us forgiveness of all our guilt and freedom from God's wrath and all His punishment. He comes to keep us safe from the lies and taunts of the evil one.

Our King David comes to us today in the name of the Lord through the means of grace.

By your baptism into Christ, His triumph over the evil foe is your very own triumph. All of your sins are forgiven. You live this day and for all eternity in Christ. Nothing, not all the lies of Satan and the fury of hell, not

even death and the grave, can separate you from Jesus.

Baptized into Christ, you can gladly and joyfully say, “What belongs to Jesus belongs also to me; His righteousness is mine, His holiness is mine, His life is mine, His suffering and death are mine, His sonship is mine, His glory is mine, His heaven is mine.” All this we can cherish and treasure because of the gifts God has given us in that blessed “washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Ti 3).

Christ continues to breathe His eternal life into us through the hearing and learning of God’s Word. We gladly hear and learn the Word of God, for it is a light unto our path, to correct, enlighten, and comfort us as we walk by faith through this valley of the shadow of death.

And, again, Christ is with us to serve us in His Holy Supper. We come to His Table so that He can feed us His life-giving Body and Blood for the forgiveness of our sins and the strength to live the new life that we have in Him.

Dear Saints of God, your King David has conquered in the fight! You are safe from the taunts, the accusations, and the lies of the evil one in your King Jesus. You are safe even from death and the grave in Your King. Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!