

## *A Word from Pastor Preus*

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation. Zechariah 9:9*

One of the great themes of Advent is that of our King coming to us lowly. He comes to serve us. He is our King. His kingdom is not of this world; but it was to bring His kingdom to us that He was born into this world (Jn. 18:36-37). Jesus does not say that His kingdom is “not of this world” simply because of its true origin in a faraway place. It is also “not of this world” because of how it works. It does not work by means of God threatening and intimidating us. No! Look at the first word in the prophecy above: “*Rejoice!*” God rules us by giving to us the forgiveness of sins. He rules us by teaching us who He is, and by giving us reason to be glad.

Or does this sound trite? Does it lose meaning in time? Do we see divisions in the church, emptying pews, a culture growing more and more hostile to the exclusive claims of our Lord? What does this say about the strength of God’s kingdom? Well, it speaks more to how much we *need* God’s kingdom. There are forces outside of us – the devil and his demons; there are forces within us – our own sinful hearts and our fleshly affections and opinions that are constantly thinking wrongly about God; there are forces that are opposed to God’s rule because they are opposed to God’s mercy.

This is to say that by nature you are not just a sinner – alas, we all make mistakes – NO! It is much more serious than that! It is to say that you are by nature an enemy of God’s mercy. You are by nature inclined to define your relationship with God based on your *own* feelings and thoughts and desires rather than on the sure promises of God in Christ that make for true joy. But Christ rules us as our King by coming to us lowly. He comes to sinners lowly. He comes to you who have been taught your need for God’s mercy. He comes to you who need a righteousness that has not failed and that has not been manufactured by a sinner, but that has been earned and accepted by your God and Judge. Jesus has what you need. This Jesus comes and gives it to you.

*He comes to us. He is just.* But He does not use His justice to show us our own *lack* of justice and to condemn us. No, He gives this justice/ righteousness to us. He is *having salvation*, remember. He comes to save us. That is why we *Rejoice!* to be where He is. That is why we hear His word. That is where He comes to us. Amen.

– Pastor John Preus