

Advent 1
Matthew 21:1-9
November 28-29, 2009
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Girard, Illinois

In the Name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Even if our spirits are willing, our flesh is weak. It is terribly difficult to subdue, and the things we would not do, the things we hate, those we do. It betrays us again and again. Our flesh is the seedbed of lust, gluttony, and avarice, and all our deepest sorrows come from our own sins.

The years sweep by and retrospect has little to show but a list of crimes, a catalog of lies we've told, of promises we've forgotten, of slander that has risen up out of our hearts. *Is it any wonder that our families are so broken? That our lives are so complicated? That the prisons are so full?* So too do we see in retrospect the signs of God's wrath and the temporary character of this earth. Terrorists, earthquakes, divorce, and war all serve as warnings of the judgment to come. Nothing on earth is the same today as it was a year ago, if we get one step forward, we still suffer two steps back, all things are in decay, are dying. We are in constant turmoil and change. Death is having its way. Only the Word of God never changes.

This should fill us with fear and reform our behavior, but instead we hatch plans. We can build bigger barns to store our crops. We can delay paying our debts. We can kill our enemies or at least, destroy their reputations.

These plans are vain. Our pretending at wisdom is a mockery of the Wisdom which comes down from above. Repent.

The weakness of our flesh does not abide in our physicality, but in our minds. If you have ever eaten so much that it was hard to breathe or you had to loosen your belt, you have proven that your mind rules your body, and rarely for good. Over eating is not the desire of your body, which begged you to stop, but of your fallen mind, which sought pleasure after pleasure and ignored the clear warnings of fullness and kept eating even though it hurt. It is not the skin and bones that are the problem, it is our personalities, our wills, which crave pleasure and vice. It is we ourselves, in our innermost beings, who are broken and sick, rotten and dying.

For this Our Lord has come. He has taken up the weakness of our Flesh, become one of us, body, mind, and spirit, in order to redeem our fallen flesh, our perverted wills, and our sickly minds. He did not leave you here alone to suffer in your craven weaknesses. He has come to rescue you. He is one of us in every way, but He is not weak. He does not sin. He cannot sin, because the Law is His will. He is the Law and while He is humble, lowly, He is not weak. And notice this: He comes not in the declared-to-be-good flesh of Adam before the Fall or to insert Himself into Eden. Rather He comes in the corrupted flesh of St. Mary. He takes up that which is prone to alcoholism, homosexuality, cancer, weariness, and most significantly, death. He comes in the cursed flesh of Adam's inheritance. He enters into the chaos of our dying lives, to endure

our hatred and betrayal, our violence and our phoniness. He is tempted in every way that we are, but He does not succumb or fail. His Flesh is as willing as His Spirit. He endures all that we do to Him without a desire for vengeance or reputation or even success. He endures in perfect love. He is at one with His Father's will. Their will is to give Jesus Christ into death at the hands of sinners that those sinners might be redeemed and live. He comes to steal Satan's prey away by serving as the Victim and Fulfillment of His own unbending Law, that is, of His own unbending and perfect will. He who knows no sin, knows what He is doing, and became sin to make sinners free of sin and death.

That is why He rides the donkey into Jerusalem. He comes to be a sacrifice. That crowd of sinners which adores Him is inspired by the Spirit. Only sinners shout, **“Hosanna, save us now!”** They carpet His path to the cross with garments and palms. Soon He will not be carried, but will carry the instrument of His death. He will not walk upon carpet but will fall, naked on the rocks. But we are not ashamed and we do not feel sorry for Him. For we are the sinners who need Him to do it. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit we shout, **“Hosanna, save us now! Ride on, O Lord. You are the Blessed One who comes in the Name of the Lord, in the Lord's will, with the Lord's Life in Your Blood. You are our salvation, our Savior. Hosanna!”**

We are the sinners who shout for the Messiah to be Himself, to save us, to keep His promises. Unlike us, He is not weak. He does what He says. And thus are shouting sinners transformed with a Word. By grace He makes them praying saints, saints whom the Lord loves, with whom He is well-pleased, whose weakness has been washed away, forgiven. Judgment Day is not then a day of wrath to be feared, but a day of homecoming and celebration. For the Lord who came to earth as a Man first in Bethlehem, comes now as a Man, our God, in His Word and Sacraments, and soon He shall come again in glory.

Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Amen.