

You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet – Philippians 2:5-11

Pastor Colin Rieke – April 9, 2017

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
⁷ but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it,

On March 26, 1905 the well-known Austrian psychiatrist Viktor Frankl was born. He also happened to be Jewish. When the Nazi Reich took power in the 1930s into the 1940s, they began to round up Jews and other deplorable groups into concentration camps. Viktor Frankl was one of those Jews. What made Viktor Frankl stand out among the other prisoners is the way he responded to the concentration camps. I'm sure you've heard stories about the horrible conditions and treatment of the prisoners in these camps. But what Viktor Frankl came to realize is there was one thing that this guards couldn't take away from him. And that one thing was his attitude, how he responded to their treatment. While many prisoners would be afraid, angry, bitter, resentful, Viktor strove to be the exact opposite. It was the one thing that he could control.

There was a man who lived nearly two millennia before Viktor Frankl who responded to adversity in a very similar way. That man was the Apostle Paul, one of the greatest missionaries in the early Christian Church. In fact it was because of his mission zeal that he had been taken as a prisoner. Yet despite his time as a prisoner, the Apostle Paul had every reason to rejoice. But it was for a different reason than Viktor Frankl. Paul wrote about the reason he had to rejoice in the letter we read a portion of this morning, a letter we call Philippians.

In this letter of Philippians, Paul gave the ultimate reason to rejoice, and that is in his Savior and yours – Jesus Christ. It is the same Savior that rode into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday to adoring crowds who shouted, "Hosanna! Hosanna!" But what those adoring crowds didn't know was that this was

the beginning of something big, much bigger than they were expecting. It's almost as if Paul is summarizing how big it was in this section of Philippians this morning. It's almost as if Paul is telling them and us that Palm Sunday is nothing compared to what's coming. If you think Palm Sunday is great, YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET.

1. Making himself nothing
2. Being given everything

(1)

Palm Sunday is certainly a reason to rejoice. The crowds that surrounded Jesus shouting Hosanna weren't doing anything wrong. In fact, Jesus actually acknowledged their praise and chastised the Pharisees who wanted to silence the crowd. Just imagine what that scene would have been like. A few miles outside of Jerusalem, Jesus miraculously acquired a donkey and began to ride into Jerusalem with the throngs of pilgrims who were gathering there for the Passover. Crowds from Jerusalem came out to meet the pilgrims who were travelling into the city and joined in this festive procession. Some took off their outer cloaks, others cut down palm branches to place in his path, all the while the crowd shouted, "Hosanna! Hosanna!"

This was praise that Jesus certainly was deserving. He deserved to have the praise of this procession, because as Paul proclaimed in Philippians, "**Jesus, being in very nature God.**" But it was praise he was always deserving. Jesus could have had a parade for himself every single day of his life, and that still would not have been all the praise that he deserved, merely for being the creator God. But Jesus didn't have a parade every day of his life, and Jesus didn't need it. He didn't need the adoration from the crowd to accomplish what he set out to do. And this ride into Jerusalem began the culmination of that mission.

The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians, "**Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself.**" Think of each one of those phrases as Jesus taking a step down the ladder of humility. First of all, not considering equality with God, even though he could have. Instead he became a human being, but not just any human being, but a poor human being, from a poor family. You see, Paul is talking about Jesus' life from the very beginning, from the time he was born of the Virgin Mary. This was when Jesus' humbling began. Jesus' entire life on this earth was a period of humiliation.

Now, we don't consider it all that humiliating to be a person, because that's all we know. Jesus knew what it was like to be God, what it was like to live in heaven, what it was like to have all power, what it was like to live eternally. But he willingly gave that up for a time, to be a man who walked on this earth. He willingly was born of a poor, virgin mother, and he willingly came to Jerusalem for one purpose, and that purpose Paul mentions next. "**Being found in the appearance of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.**"

The one who knew no death, became obedient to death. He gave up everything, including the humble life he chose to live, so that he could die. But not just any death, the most painful, humiliating

death imaginable, death on a Roman cross. So the crowds who adored him on Palm Sunday, AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET. As humble as Jesus life had been up until Palm Sunday, it was about to become much more intense.

But it was the reason he did it that blows us all away. He didn't do it for the praise, he didn't do it because of a challenge, he did it because of love. He did it because of his amazing love for you. As true God, Jesus knew you and saw you before you were even born. And even though there was nothing special about you, even though there was nothing about you that drew him to you. Even though, like a petulant child, you would continue to disobey him time after time, he loved you. You are what caused the Lord of Glory to come down off of his throne and become a man to set you free. Because he knew there was no hope for you on your own.

You ain't seen a love like this before, nor will you see a love like this ever again. We are not capable of such tremendous love, we cannot even imagine that this kind of love exists. But it did, and it does. For Jesus rode forth into Jerusalem, and later that week would be on trial and condemned to die. The religious leaders thought it was for the blasphemy of claiming to be God. But in reality it was because he was God, paying for the sins of us all. He made himself nothing.

(2)

But an amazing story like this does not end on a note like that. Which is why Paul goes on to say, **“Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place, and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.”** YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET. The exaltation, the raising up of Jesus, was just as incredible as his humiliation. If the crowds thought it was incredible that Jesus was riding into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday, they would just have to wait and see what Jesus would do on the following Sunday.

God exalted Jesus not only from the dead, but to the highest place. Once again, Paul is taking a look at Jesus' life with 20/20 hindsight. He's taking a look at the bigger picture, which is something that the crowds on Palm Sunday didn't have. Paul knew that Jesus not only rose from the dead, but that he would ascend back into heaven, back to his Father's side, back to all power and glory. But don't think for a moment that just because Jesus is no longer here on this earth, that he's powerless to do anything for us here.

Jesus is still not only watching over you, but he is also watching over his church. He promises that **“where two or three are gathered together, there he is with them.”** He promises that a church built on him will not be overcome. He promises that God's Word will remain as long as this world endures. The one who promises all of this, has the power to see that it happens. This is because we know what's coming next.

The apostle Paul does not stop by saying **“every knee should bow,”** as in everybody should give Jesus honor and worship, but it's a reminder that every knee will bow down to Jesus, both willingly and unwillingly. For the ultimate crowning moment of Jesus' exaltation, at least from an earthly timeframe, will be when he comes back at the end of time, at the end of the age, to take Christians to heaven, and to condemn non-Christians in their unbelief. This is the moment that our hope, this is the moment that our

faith is waiting for. This is what gives us reason to have a positive attitude in this life. Because even if we don't make it to that day, even if we die before that day ever comes, it just means we get to see Jesus a little sooner. We know that Jesus is still Lord who has been given everything.

With this thought in mind, we can go out in joy. We can rejoice for ourselves, who have been so loved by our God. But we can also go out in joy and confidence to tell others, especially in the week leading up to Easter. I know it seems like a recurring theme, "Pastor wants us to tell others to come to church," but it's true. Because I want people to know more about their Savior. I want people to know more about the solution to all of their problems, I want people to know more about the cure for all their diseases. We have the truth, we have the solution, we have the cure. It made me so happy to hear this week about one of our members who shared his excitement with me about going to his neighbors up and down the street inviting them to our Ice-cream social and our Easter service. I pray that we all might be this excited.

Now Viktor Frankl, the Jewish-Austrian psychiatrist did end up surviving his time in the concentration camp and went on to write much about his time in the camps. But eventually he did die. As Christians, we have even more reason to be content and joyful through all circumstances that surround us, not just because it's what we can control. But because we have what our Savior has done for us. He rode into Jerusalem on this day in a triumphal parade. But the people hadn't seen anything yet. The heavy lifting came on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. But because of all that we get to live in joy not only here and now, but also in heaven. Amen.