

Scripture Text:

Luke 9:51 “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for [Jesus] to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,”

II Chronicles 20: *[the enemies of Israel gather and the King is fearful]*

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of Jehovah, before the new court, **6** and said: "O Jehovah God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? **7** Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? **8** And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, **9** 'If disaster comes upon us--sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine--we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.'... **12** O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." **13** Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before Jehovah.

[14 Then the Spirit of Jehovah came upon ... a Levite]

Thus says Jehovah to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. ... **17** You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah... **18** And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before Jehovah, worshiping Jehovah. ... **20** So they rose early in the morning and ... as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in Jehovah your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." **21** And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to Jehovah, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise Jehovah, For His mercy endures forever." **22** Now when they began to sing and to praise, Jehovah set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. **23** For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. ... and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much... **27** Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for Jehovah had made them rejoice over their enemies. **28** So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of Jehovah. **29** And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that Jehovah had fought against the enemies of Israel. **30** Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

"Praising Our Faithful Savior"

As promised this morning we are going to focus on verse 51 of chapter nine in the Gospel of Luke: "Now it came to pass, when the time had come for [Jesus] to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,"

We will see that the battle is the Lord's and I trust this will be a great encouragement to all of us as we enter Holy Week for 2008, on this Palm Sunday

- As the Angel Gabriel proclaimed before the birth of Jesus, He has come to save His people from their sins and the time to accomplish this by His being lifted up is near!

One way for us to think about this in modern terms, is that Jesus had an important appointment to keep! I think that all of us, at whatever age can relate to keeping appointments:

- Some are very important and others not so important:

An appointment with ones doctor to review a major test resulting from some serious health concerns should not be missed.

Putting off an appointment to have your nails done for a few days would not mean the end of the world.

- Some we look forward too, others we would rather skip!

When the Mondovi Center schedules the Messiah and we buy tickets many of us REALLY look forward to that appointment!

When the dentist appointment is on the calendar, some of us look for any reason to do something else

- Some, like young people facing their first driving test, might come with mixed feelings!

You can't wait and are scared to death all at the same time!

Jesus had begun to reveal to His disciples the agony and ultimate victory that awaited Him at His appointed time in Jerusalem!

- What we see in Luke and the other Gospels, is that there was an appointed time, for the appointed person to carry out the appointed task

Here we need to clearly see the faithfulness of our Savior:

- Carrying out what was needed to fulfill the sure promises of the Father... Beyond anything we can imagine from a human perspective!

SURE promises as explained in Jeremiah chapter 33:

“19 And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, saying, 20 "Thus says Jehovah: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, 21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne," ... 25 "Thus says the Lord: 'If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, 26 then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his descendants to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "

- **The prophet relates the faithfulness of Jesus to what we consider even more sure than death and taxes!**

[to the kids] Is the sun going to come up tomorrow morning?

Are you pretty sure of that? You should be!

- **We have an even more sure promise that Jesus is going to Jerusalem to save His people from their sins!**

We should reflect on that EACH and EVERY time we hear an officer of the church declare that our sins have been forgiven in the worship service. We should reflect on that EACH and EVERY time we come to this Table knowing Jesus is present with us! We see this promise from the Prophet Jeremiah carried out as the Gospel goes to the Gentiles in Acts 13:44

“On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' " 48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.”

The peace and security that we draw from this important week in the Church Calendar each year is from reflecting on God’s control of all things, including our salvation: God does NOT miss important appointments!

If you do a word study on “appointment” in the Scriptures you will find it used often.

You would find God appointing the birth of children: Like Seth to carry on in the place of Abel or Isaac as the heir for Abraham.

You will find God appointing wives for Isaac and later Boaz and others.

We see God appointing judgments for the Egyptians, and even later upon His own rebellious people

We see God appointing leaders: Priests and Kings in the nation of Israel.

We see God appointing pagan empires to protect God's people in the Book of Daniel

We see God appointing many feast days and sacrifices, appointing the craftsmen to build the Tabernacle and Temple and then the Levites to care for them! Now we see all of this coming together for the most important appointment in history: The Day of Visitation referred to by Jesus as He approached Jerusalem:

Luke 19:41 "Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

And they are without excuse: All of those feasts and sacrifices pointed to this great sacrifice that Jesus was about to offer at the appointed time. All of those appointed Prophets, Priests and Kings pointed to and are now fulfilled in THE Prophet Priest and King who has come to carry out His appointed task... Saving His people from their sins!

➤ SO how should we react to such Good News?

When we consider facing our enemies today, The world, The flesh and The Devil himself, it is an overwhelming battle from a human standpoint, just as King Jehoshaphat faced in the account I read from II Chronicles this morning.

➤ We must remember that the battle IS the Lord's – A lesson we learn over & over in this life!

➤ IF you don't understand this, then you will not know the peace that passes all understanding we are promised

➤ These Old Testament accounts are recorded to teach us these lessons

King Jehoshaphat had VAST armies arrayed against him with no hope of victory!

➤ IF he had said to himself and the people, well let's go out and do the best we can and trust God for a victory, it would have been a disaster.

Instead the King turned to God, who rules over all! He reminded God that they had built a sanctuary with His name saying, "If disaster comes upon us – sword, judgments, pestilence, or famine – we will stand before this temple and in Your

presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save!”

- A sure reminder of why we are commanded to baptize believers & their children into God’s Name!

God comes speaking through the Levite saying, “do not be afraid or dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s!”

Verse 17 brings comfort to any who doubt the strength of God’s arm to save:

“You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah!”

- Their response should be our response, each and every week:
They bowed and worshiped before the Lord!

As they go out to face overwhelming enemies, the King encourages them with these words: “Believe in Jehovah your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets and you shall prosper!”

- The people are commanded to show their faith in worship!

The king appointed singers to praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army saying ‘praise Jehovah, for His mercy endures forever.’”

Any military or “rational” person who might have noticed what was going on would surely have chuckled, thinking to himself, thinking what fools, they have NO idea what lies ahead on the battlefield.

Just as I am sure the Roman soldiers present in the City of Jerusalem on that appointed day must have chuckled at a “King” who came riding into town on a donkey with children singing His praises.

- Your homework should be to meditate on Psalm 2 so you can clearly see who had the last laugh!

With the music & praises of an obedient people ascending before His throne, the God of Heaven now sets about to wage the battle against His people’s enemies:

Reminding US that the battle is the Lord’s!

He simply arranges some ambushes and has them all slaughter each other... Much as we see the wicked on the national stage these days!

The destruction was so complete we are told that it took three days to gather just the spoils of the battle!

On Palm Sunday we remember the Lord’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem...

Jesus came NOT to embrace and soak up the praises of the crowds

Jesus came at the appointed time to wage the decisive battle against the enemies of His people: Sin and death... To crush the head of Satan!

This battle would take a heavy toll as Jesus has been warning His disciples, and we will remember Friday night reflecting on His time on the cross.

But next Sunday, we celebrate His victory over sin & death in the resurrection!

Our account from II Chronicles tells us that the King led all the people back to Jerusalem with JOY.

Jesus has come to Jerusalem as the appointed man, at the appointed time, to accomplish the appointed task of saving His people from their sins:

- **The people who will as His Church... His Bride... as the New Jerusalem: NOW serve Him with Joy!**

Then we read that the people came to Jerusalem with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of Jehovah!

- **As the New Jerusalem we gather each week to worship our Savior!**

The result is one that might seem strange to our modern ears: “And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that Jehovah had fought against the enemies of Israel.

Do the kingdoms of this world fear our God today because of the work of His Church?

- **That is a sobering question to ponder**
- **Did Jesus go to the cross so we could be friends with the pagans around us?**
- **How would you work a proper level of fear into a marketing survey to determine how to establish a ‘successful’ church?**

The real irony is that our account from II Chronicles ends where many in the modern church try to be:

“30: Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.”

Our goal and certainly our prayer should not be to offend those around us or even to be in conflict with them: BUT this too is a battle that must be won by the Lord IF we are going to do the Lord’s work in the Lord’s way!

- **We must know that Jesus is the faithful Savior!**

He was the right man in the right place waging the right battle for our souls!

We have seen an example of how we depend on God to win our battles for us from II Chronicles

We should reflect upon these truths each year of our lives as we celebrate Palm Sunday in the church calendar to remind us, and to teach our children, that we love and serve a faithful Savior who wages our battles!

We know this because Luke tells us that “when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,”

Jesus did not falter or turn back. He did not stray to the left or to the right, but entered Jerusalem on that appointed day to accomplish the task that His Father has sent Him to do: We must remember as Paul admonished the Corinthians, that all of our battles belong to the Lord:

II Corinthians 10:3 “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

Communion Meditation:

John 15:12 “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.”