

Palmarum, A ✕ D 2010

Matthew 26-27

In the Name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!

Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry.

O Savior meek, pursue Thy road,

With palms and scattered garments strowed.

1 For you, sinner. The Lord Jesus mounted a donkey, paraded into Jerusalem, fixed His face toward the cross for you. For the crowds, for the disciples, for the apostles, for you. He goes to die for you. Why the shouts of “Hosanna, Lord, save us”? Why has the Lord been so fixated on Jerusalem that nothing could deter Him? Why did the joyful sounds of children singing “Hosanna” change into the ominous sounds of the crowds jeering “Crucify”? For you.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!

In lowly pomp ride on to die.

O Christ, Thy triumphs now begin

O'er captive death and conquered sin.

2 For you, rebel. Apart from Jesus everything you do is rebellion against God. Every sin is also a breaking of the first commandment. Every motive is ultimately selfish. Every good deed is secretly wicked. Some people might die for a hero or a noble. A man who gives his life in exchange for a better man is a martyr, his fame lives on. But a Man who would give His life for a life not worth saving is a fool. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. In His foolish love, Jesus rides on in lowly pomp to die. For you.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!

The angel armies of the sky

Look down with sad and wond'ring eyes

To see the-approaching sacrifice.

3 For you, mortal. This is mercy that angels have never experienced nor received. They can only look with sad and wondering eyes as the King of Kings goes to die as a criminal. Here consider what angels cannot. God goes to die. And He does not go to die for angels. He goes to die for mortals, for humans, for sinners. He goes to bear their sin and endure the punishment for sinners: death and damnation. All this He willingly does so that He might show you mercy. Angels have no word of praise for God's mercy because He hasn't shown them mercy. But He has shown mercy to you. In the death of Jesus Christ, you have the assurance of God's mercy, sealed in blood. For you.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!

Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh.

The Father on His sapphire throne

Awaits His own anointed Son.

4 For you, beloved. That week was for you. The Son of God rode into Jerusalem to die damned, so that you might die the blessed death of faith. His holy passion, His bitter suffering, His excruciating death, were for you. His sweating blood, His being crowned with thorns, His being beaten by soldiers, His being spat upon, His being whipped until exhaustion, His thirsting, His crying were for you. For you Jesus died to reconcile you to God, to take away your sin, to clothe you with His righteousness.

Ride on, ride on in majesty! For you.

In lowly pomp ride on to die.

Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,

Then take, O God, Thy pow'r and reign.

5 For you, child of God. This week is for you. Holy week is not a reenactment of past events. It's a reminder of the depth of the Lord's love for you. This week, with its time for meditation on the Lord's passion, is for you. There's no need to try to transport yourself to Gethsamane, to Golgotha, or to the grave. Your Lord comes instead to you—in the flesh. He comes in His Holy Supper to deliver the forgiveness He won for you through His death and resurrection: today, Thursday, and Saturday. This week is for you. It breaks your regular routines and forces itself into your schedule. It disrupts the normal pattern of life and calls your attention to the things that matter. Ride on, Lord. Ride on to die. Then take, O God, Thy pow'r and reign. For you. All for you.

In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Jeff Hemmer