

Behold your King

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

I'm from Penang. My wife and I have been attending KEC for the past two years. So my wife is there, Rachel, and my son, David, and Annalise. And we serve in Kalimantan, Indonesia, but we have been in Kuching the past two years.

So it's a privilege to be able to bring the word of the Lord to you this morning. And let us open our hearts as we read the word of God.

Let us pray before we start. Father, we come before you. We pray, O God, that you speak to us through your word.

Lord, unless you open our eyes, we will not see. Unless you open our ears, we will not hear. And unless you move our hearts, we will remain unchanged.

[1 : 26] So Holy Spirit, we pray this morning that you will do a work that only you can do. We pray that your word will go forth in power and it will not return to you for it.

So we commit the preaching of your word. In Jesus' name we ask and pray. Amen. Amen. So even as we celebrate Chinese New Year, this season of Chinese New Year, I'm sure many of you as these few days your phones have been buzzing with all the wishes of Chinese New Year.

Gong xi fa chai Chinese New Year. Ushering in a new year. And what are the things that people are wishing you? Most likely it is, may this year bring you health, wealth, prosperity and peace.

Right? Most of us will have an SMS like that. And in fact, maybe we are the ones that send out messages like that. This is kind of the thing that is the highlight of Chinese New Year.

This is what we hope for in this coming year as we usher in a new year. This is what we hold on to as a hope for a new year. You know, and you see the whole of Kuching, you know, everywhere is painted red.

[2 : 40] Yeah? Everywhere is full of red colour. Why? Maybe for many of you who are not Chinese, you might not understand. Why red colour? Well, red colour is the colour that brings luck.

It is the colour that is to bring in luck and fortune. And it is also to scare away bad luck. Yeah? So the colour red, why you see there are so many red, why a lot of people are wearing red this morning, is for this purpose and for this reason.

And maybe you go to people's houses, you see there are pineapples hanging in front of the house. Why pineapples? Do they have pineapples in China? I don't know. But why pineapples?

Pineapple, well, the Hokkien word for pineapples is Ong Lai, which means Ong, come, good luck, come, good fortune, come in. That's why the pineapple. And why we give up oranges, why mandarin oranges are sold in all the supermarkets in Kuching.

Well, the word from orange is kam, which is like gold. So we are actually passing on the good fortune, bringing in good fortune to our house. And if you have been shopping in Kuching, in the supermarkets the past, well, forever, you will hear this one song that you always hear.

[3 : 52] Chai shen tau. Tung, tadadung, tung, tung, tung, tung. Everybody knows this song, right? But what does this song mean? What does, well, for people who don't understand mandarin like me, what is this song?

Chai shen is actually the god of wealth. God of wealth. God of fortune. You know, and he is depicted as someone who rides on a black tiger and he holds a gold rod.

You know, he holds a gold rod and his rod is very powerful. It can turn stone or iron into gold. Wow. And so that's why the song welcomes Chai shen. Everybody welcomes him.

You know, Chai shen, come to my doorstep. Chai shen, welcome into my home. You know, this is what is the values that we hold on to during Chinese New Year.

And then for Chinese New Year, the worst thing, the worst thing for Chinese New Year is what? Black colour. Many years ago, there's an advertisement. Hak sik, hak sik. Wow, they're very scared of black colour.

[4 : 53] Why? Why are Chinese very pantang black colour? Well, black colour is the colour of death. It is the colour of mourning.

And so death is something that we fear very much. You know, during Chinese New Year, we don't speak of morbid things. Don't speak of death.

And if someone speaks of death or morbid things, touch with Chai. Yeah? And especially if you have had a death in your family, please don't come and celebrate.

Please don't come and visit my house. Because from Chai shen tau, become Chai shen chow. Yeah? And so we are so afraid.

And this is not just limited to the Chinese, but all cultures have such a belief. Yeah? We have a lot of rituals and practices where at the end of the day, it is we want to gain health, wealth and prosperity.

[5 : 52] And we want to avoid death. We fear death. Death is a fearful and frightful thing for all cultures. Yeah? Kia si, kia kui. Yeah?

We are very scared of death. And so this is a culture that is very prevalent. And even as many of us who are sitting here, maybe we have said we have been Christians for many years.

We don't believe in these things. We don't believe in chai shen. Well, maybe we do not say it with our lips, but many of us hold on to the same values. And so although we do not acknowledge chai shen as the God of wealth, but do we look to Jesus as our chai shen, you know, our God of wealth?

And so this is something that we want to reflect on. And so even as we have heard the passage read today from John chapter 12, we see a picture of Jesus coming into Jerusalem.

And Jesus is coming into Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. Well, if you do not know, the Passover is actually like New Year, Jewish New Year.

[6 : 55] It is a new year for the Jews. And Jews from all over will come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. And Jesus is entering into Jerusalem at this time. And we see in verse 14 and 15, as Jesus enters into Jerusalem, He is entering and He is fulfilling an ancient prophecy that is found in Zechariah chapter 9.

This morning we read that passage in our call to worship. Zechariah chapter 9. It talks about a coming Messiah. So from verse 1 to verse 8, it speaks of God's judgment on Israel's enemies. And then in verse 9, was the verse we read this morning, Rejoice greatly, daughter Zion! Shout, daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Messiah is depicted as the humble shepherd king who comes to Jerusalem to take His rightful place. And as you continue to read Zechariah, He will bring peace and restoration for His people and for all the nations.

And even as Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey, He is fulfilling that prophecy. And not just that prophecy, another ancient prophecy that is in Genesis chapter 49, when Jacob blessed his sons and when He blesses Judah, He says that the king will come from Judah, a king that rides on a donkey, and He will command the billions of nations.

[8 : 38] So even as Jesus rides into Jerusalem, He is actually clearly declaring Himself as Messiah. He is telling the world, Messiah has come. He is the prophesied king of Israel.

So Jesus did not enter Jerusalem quietly. He wasn't hiding the fact that He was the king of Israel. He was declaring to the Jews that your king has come.

And it seems so that the Jews or the people in Jerusalem at that time, it seems like they recognized Messiah. They recognized Jesus as Messiah.

Why do we say this? Well, you can see that in verse 13. They were crying out, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And blessed is the king of Israel.

So the people were singing praises. The people were declaring. And it was not just a random declaration of praise, but they were attributing this to Jesus, that He was the Messiah.

[9 : 37] And what they are doing, actually, they are quoting from Psalms 118. Psalms 118. Psalms 118 is a psalm possibly written in the time of Moses, and it describes a festive procession coming into Jerusalem after a great deliverance.

It is a song of thanksgiving, and it calls God's people to praise God for His steadfast love and to testify of God's rescue from distress.

And Psalms 118 is also a messianic psalm, meaning it is a psalm that points to the coming Messiah. It indicates, it's a prophecy to the people of Israel that they have been holding on to for the Messiah that is going to come.

And this is not just, you know, just some random song in a songbook that not many people know the lyrics to. Psalm 118 is actually a very familiar psalm to most of the Jews because it is part of the Hallel, which is taken from Psalms 113 to Psalms 118, and it is a commonly sung psalm during Passover and during many feasts.

And so it is something that is known to everyone. It is something, and even as they see Jesus coming in, they see the Messiah is coming. And the word Hosanna is a Hebrew expression.

[11:03] It means, give salvation now. We find that in Psalms 118, verse 25. And it is an exclamation of praise and adoration. And this is what they are doing.

And so we see the welcome that Jesus was being welcomed. It wasn't just, you know, one or two people, you know, say, yay, coming Jesus. But the crowds were welcoming Him.

And as we see, that is such a festive, that is such a celebratory feeling, you know, that is happening. That was such a triumph. What do we see in John chapter 12?

It tells us that the people were holding up and waving palm branches. What is the meaning of the palm branch? Well, it is actually a national symbol of the people of Israel.

And it is a practice that they have practiced for 200 years before even Jesus was coming into Jerusalem. It signaled that there was a fervent hope that a Messiah was coming.

[12:03] And so when they saw Jerusalem, when they saw Jesus coming, they quickly went and cut palm branches and they were waving. They were waving it. And they were signaling that Jesus is the Messiah.

In other parts of Scripture, we see that the people also spread their clothes, their coats on the road. And it is a custom that they cover the path of someone that they thought worthy of highest honor.

So they covered the roads with their clothes and with branches so that the person that is of highest honor will not walk on the road. And even if you were not Jewish, even if you did not understand these things as an observer and as an outsider, as the Romans were there, when they looked at what was happening, it would have conjured an image of the Roman triumph where a conquering general would march through the city and he would parade off his captives and his spoils of war. And everyone that was in Jerusalem at that time knew that this Jesus was coming. And it wasn't just a welcome that they were welcoming a prophet or a teacher.

The welcome that they were giving Jesus was a welcome that was worthy of a king. And what the Jews were doing, they were actually ushering Jesus into Jerusalem to take his place as king.

[13:28] Wow. Can you imagine the high? Can you imagine the crowds? This is known as Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

And the church celebrates this as Palm Sunday. But just five days later, just five days later, we have Good Friday where the celebrated, triumphal, blessed king hung on a cross and with a sign on his head that says, King of the Jews.

What happened between Palm Sunday and Good Friday? What happened between the triumphal entry of Jesus coming into Jerusalem and him hanging on the cross?

To understand this, you must understand that the Jews had been waiting for a king for a very long time. For more than 400 years, the Jews suffered at the hands of their enemies.

They were taken into captive. They suffered in the hands of the Persians, the Persian Empire, the Greek Empire, and then currently the Roman Empire. And in those 400 years or more, Yahweh was silent.

[14:49] He did not send them any prophet. There was no revelation. There was no word from the Lord. All the Jews had to hold on to at that time of darkness was the prophecies of old, like Zechariah 9, like Psalms 1-8.

And their hope that they hold on to was that Messiah would come. And when he comes, he would bring judgment upon the enemies of Israel. And he would deliver his people.

There will finally be peace, prosperity, and abundance. Messiah will come and save us. He will make everything right.

Israel will be great again. This was the king that they were waiting for. But then, this was not why Jesus came.

John, in his Gospel, recording earlier, from John 10, verse 14-18, I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep.

[15 : 59] This is Jesus speaking. And my sheep know me. And I lay down my life for the sheep. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again.

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. And even we see that in the same, in Jesus' own words also, as after he has entered Jerusalem, and John 12, verse 23, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Very truly, I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No. It was for this very reason I came to this hour.

Father, glorify your name. The king hanging on the cross was not an accident. It was not a tragedy or an unexpected turn of events.

[17 : 10] It was exactly why he came. And so, as we see, the king that the people were waiting for expecting, and Jesus was not what they were waiting for.

They did not understand it. The people did not understand. Even Jesus' disciples didn't understand it. In verse 16, at first, his disciples did not understand all this. only after Jesus was glorified did they realize all these things had been written about him and all these things had been done to him.

His disciples who had been with him all this while, Jesus has spoken to them plainly, has told them that he would die and he would be raised from the dead. But, they did not understand these things. And definitely, the crowds that were gathered, the people did not understand these things. they were all there, they have heard so much about this man coming on a donkey.

They have heard so much about him, how he has healed the sick, made the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk. He heard how demons tremble at his voice and he cussed out demons.

[18 : 24] They have heard how he fed multitudes with just a handful of bread and fish. They have heard so much about this man and just only, they just heard that he also called a man who had been buried in the tomb for four days.

Four days in the tomb and he just, with one word, he called and that man walked out of the tomb. He raised the dead to life. And it happened in Bethany.

This is less than two miles from Jerusalem. It's just so close. you know, it's just like in Kota Samarahan. You hear that? It's so close, you know, and many of them who are there actually witness it with their own eyes.

They actually saw the dead man coming out of the tomb or they know someone who saw it firsthand. And so, and if they did not believe it, if they didn't have a chance to see it, look, Lazarus is standing just with the crowd.

He is there, he is alive. He is walking, he is living. What more proof do you need? You know? And, wow, who could have asked for a greater Messiah?

[19 : 46] This Messiah could be their miracle worker. He would be their giant slayer, like King David who destroyed the enemies of Israel.

He would be their source of abundance. If five loaves and two fish you feed thousands, wow, what could be impossible for him? This is why the people cried out, Hosanna!

And even after Jesus has plainly spoke to them and Jesus has told them what was going to happen in verse 23, they did not believe it.

Even a voice from heaven confirmed it. You know? In verse 28, we can see that. Then a voice came up from heaven, I have glorified it and will glorify it again.

The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered. Others said an angel had spoken to him. Even a voice from heaven confirmed. and they heard it but they did not understand it.

[20 : 59] How do we know that? In verse 34, it says, the crowd spoke up. We have heard from the law that the Messiah will remain forever. So how can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up?

Who is this Son of Man? They knew the prophecies, they sang it year after year, but they did not really know it. they did not see that Jesus was the Messiah.

And so, the question to us, who is your King? Just like the crowd, many would readily enthrone a King who has come to defeat their enemies and deliver them from their oppressors. Many would gladly usher in Messiah who comes to give them a better life, peace, abundance, prosperity. Many would sing praises to a Savior who promises to bless them, to heal them, to favour them.

Wow, who doesn't want a Messiah like this? We will cry Hosanna. But the truth is, it's very telling of human nature, the truth is we fashion for ourselves gods in the images of our deepest desires.

[22 : 19] And we readily pay homage to anyone or anything that promises to give us what we want, even if they are just false and empty promises.

Jesus. And yet, when the true King stands before us, having made Himself known to us clearly through His creation and through His Word, we refuse to acknowledge Him.

When Messiah does not fit the picture that we have formed in our minds, or when He refuses to conform to the graven images that we have fashioned of Him, we say, God can't be like that.

That's not the God that I believe in. That's not the God that I serve. This is not my King. We suppress the truth and we refuse to glorify Jesus as the rightful King over our lives because if we do, we would have to denounce the King that is currently on the throne, that is ourselves.

that is how dark and wicked and rebellious and sinful we are. We have committed high treason against our King and for that it should be you and I that was hung on that tree.

[23 : 56] And yet Jesus died. While we were still powerless, while we were still sinners and haters of God, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Sovereign of the Universe died for you and for me.

what kind of King does that? In history, multitudes have died for kings. But a king that dies for his people, who has heard of such a thing?

He died to give us peace. Not peace with man or with the world, but peace with God.

He died that we may be healed, not of every sickness that ails our bodies, but of the hereditary, chronic, and terminal disease that plagues every single one of us.

Sin. He came to heal us of sin. He died to defeat our oppressor, and to give us victory over our last great enemy, the one that we so greatly fear and we avoid at all costs.

[25 : 28] Death. This is truly the long-awaited King. Jesus truly was the promised Messiah that the prophets spoke of.

king. But they could not see it. They did not understand it, and they would not receive him as king. but the story doesn't end there.

It doesn't just end with a king on the cross. Many times when we preach the gospel or when we share with our friends and we talk about what Jesus did, we talk about how he died on the cross. But that is not a complete gospel. a gospel that is just focused on the cross is incomplete because the climax of the gospel, the climax of all this is not the cross, but the resurrection.

And from the day that it happened until this day and up to now, the enemies of the cross, the enemies of Jesus, they have tried to deny the resurrection.

[26 : 47] they tried to cover it up, they tried to scandalize it, they tried to explain it away with lies. Back then, even then, the story spread.

The disciples came during the night and stole his body. That is why the tomb is empty. And up to now, others explain it.

It wasn't Jesus that died on the cross, but Allah exchanged Jesus with Judas. And it was Judas on the cross. Why is the resurrection so important that the enemies of the cross want to hide it?

Why is it so important? Even as we look at John, the passage in John chapter 12, John wants us to catch this point, and so he repeats it three times.

look with me, you can see in verse 1, and you see it again in verse 9 and verse 17, there is this phrase that John repeats three times.

[28 : 01] Whom Jesus had raised from the dead. And in all the festivities and in all the celebrations, the triumphal king entering into Jerusalem, John wants us not to miss this point, that Jesus, the promised Messiah, he had the power to raise the dead to life.

And Lazarus wasn't the only person that Jesus raised from the dead. As you read the Gospels, you will see that Jesus has raised a few people from the dead, even in his three years as he was ministering.

But you also mark that the resurrection of the dead at that time was only a physical one. Jesus raised these people from the dead.

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, but it was only physical. Lazarus lived again, but he would grow old and he would die. He would still die. So that's not really a big deal.

You just get a few extra years. But this was before the cross. This was before Jesus went to the cross. When Jesus died on that cross, he bore the punishment of our sins.

[29 : 27] And on that cross, he satisfied the wrath of God that was against all of all of us.

And when he rose from the dead, death is swallowed up in victory. And he has given us victory through Jesus Christ.

We see that in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Death no longer has power over us. And we do not need to fear death anymore because our king is a risen king.

And he is a king who raises the dead. this is the king that we serve. And even as Jesus was raised from the dead, the words that he spoke before he raised Lazarus from the dead, we can hold on to it.

We can have hope in it. Let's look at it. John chapter 11 verse 25. I am the resurrection and the life.

[30 : 46] The one who believes in me will live even though they die. And whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

Do you believe this? John also records in John chapter 5 from verse 21, he says, for just as the father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the son gives life to whom he is pleased to give. Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged, but has crossed over from death to life.

Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out. Those who have done what is good will rise to live and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.

[32 : 15] No man, no religion has ever dared make such a claim. I mean, it is utter foolishness.

It is ludicrous. It is unthinkable and utter nonsense. to believe that a dead man can rise and those who follow that dead man will never die.

It is foolishness to those who are perishing. But to us who are being saved, saved, it is the power of God unto salvation.

It is our hope. We have a sure hope that we have eternal life.

death. We do not need to fear death. Death is not something to be avoided. Death is not something to be feared.

[33 : 32] Death is a gateway to our inheritance. We do not need to fear death because we serve a risen king who raises the dead to life.

And so how do we approach this king? Who is this king to you? In the early parts of John chapter 12 from verse 1 to 10, we can see three responses to the Messiah.

If you come to Jesus seeking what he can do for you, seeking what you can gain, many of us came to faith or come to become Christians because we heard that Jesus would bless us.

Jesus will help our business prosper. Jesus will heal our sickness. Jesus will make our families better. Jesus will help us in time of need.

And even after we've seen miracle after miracle, we've seen sign after sign, we sat week after week in church and heard the word of God and what Jesus said, who he said he is, we just can't find it in our heart to believe it.

[35 : 13] We can't believe who he says he is because we cannot look beyond who we want him to be, who we need him to be. We will readily say, Hosanna, blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Blessed is the King of Israel, but only if the King of Israel conforms to our expectation. We are willing to acknowledge him, even follow him and serve him, but on our own terms.

When there is a sacrifice that is required, or when there is a price that needs to be paid, is a dead king really worth it?

Jesus said, you cannot serve two masters. You will love one and you will hate the other.

Judas loved a different master. And when he could, he could hide it, he could fake it, he tried to serve both.

[36 : 34] He was Jesus' disciple. And he was a trusted one. He held the money back. But when it come time to choose, his allegiance was made clear.

Judas loved money, and he sold his king for a mere pittance. Judas squandered his resurrection for some shiny pieces of metal that is not even worthy to pave the streets of heaven.

That is foolishness. And if we come to Jesus, many of us, we need to examine our hearts. When we hear Judas, we always say, oh, that's not me.

That's someone else. I follow Jesus, I serve Jesus, I believe in Jesus. But what is it that drives your life, that drives every decision of your life?

Who are you chasing? What is your hope in this world based in? Because all these things will pass.

[37 : 56] and if we truly believe in Jesus, we are a people of the risen king.

We see that in Mary. We can follow the example of Mary. Worship him. Follow him.

not because of what he can do for you, but because of who he is and what he has already done.

Many of us come to Jesus, well, I heard Jesus die on the cross for my sin. Okay, what else? What else do I get when I sign up to be a Christian, to be a follower of Christ?

What else? What else can Jesus do for me? but come to him because of what he has already done.

[39 : 03] Jesus did what no man can do. He bore our sins on the cross. And even if our portion in this life, in this world, is only suffering and sickness and persecution for the sake of righteousness, forgiveness, he has given us far more than what we could ever imagine.

Come to Jesus because he has the words of eternal life. Come to him because he is the only way, the truth, and the life, the only way you can come to the father.

And as you see him, as you see your king, withhold nothing. No act of devotion is too extravagant.

No price is too high to pay. what is a year's wages? What is a life? What is a lifetime?

It is an offering far too small to be brought to a king who has loved us and gave his life for us.

[40 : 37] He is worth far more. He is worthy of worship. all your days be found at his feet, bowing down, hanging on his every word.

As a people of the risen king, let us be like Lazarus. As one who has passed from death to life, your allegiance is to him.

you follow wherever he goes and serve him as a servant. And as you walk with Jesus, as you have fellowship with him, as you do life with him, being fully alive, it draws others to him.

Just as the crowds, you see that in verse 9 and 10, just as the crowds came out to see Lazarus, who Jesus raised from the dead.

The world will come out to see the ones who he has raised from the dead. The resurrected life points others to who he is, and many will go away believing on account of your testimony.

[42 : 07] need. But as we live that resurrected life, Jesus told us, the world will hate you.

Just as they wanted to kill Lazarus, they will want to kill you. Jesus already told his disciples in John chapter 15, if the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.

If you belong to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.

That is why the world hates you. Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the world of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

Remember the words of Jesus, John chapter 12, verse 32. Jesus said, And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.

[43 : 28] God is moving in the world in ways that we can never imagine. He has drawn peoples, the highest of peoples to himself.

And so, even as we live the resurrected life, as we declare the risen king who raises the dead, we can hold on to this hope that Jesus is drawing peoples to himself.

love. And the words that the Pharisees uttered in exasperation in verse 19, it is coming true. Look, the whole world has gone after him.

Will you go after Jesus? Will you follow the risen king? king? He is worth everything.

Behold your king. Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, go in go in nothing.

[44 : 49] Really? Let's do harm. See■■ dieses male come do do