

*Texts: 2 Samuel 5:1-5; 6:1-5; Mark 11:1-10*

*Subject: David Anointed King*

*Theme: Homecoming*

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Oct. 20, 2019, Reformation Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, NV

Grace and peace to you from God our father in heaven and the Lord Jesus,  
Amen.

Sing, shout, dance - we rejoice, since the power of God is with us in Jesus Christ. And who doesn't love a party? Last weekend Ivy and I were going out for dinner, trying to keep on schedule so we could catch a movie. We got stuck in some traffic on the strip, and when we finally got to our destination, we noticed the crowds of young people all dressed up, standing out in front of restaurant doors. Yes, it was Homecoming - that time when alumni come home to show support, the marching band puts on a special performance, the football game gets a little extra hype, and maybe there's even a parade. There's other traditions too, like spirit week, picnics, tailgating, pep rallies, the homecoming court, a king and queen, and of course the dance! Many date this tradition back to the University of Missouri in 1911 - they had a game with the parade.

Homecoming football goes back to the 19th century.

What's happening at homecoming? It's a celebration of school spirit, of victory when the team wins, of friends and families coming together to remember cherished and sacred moments from their school days. There's music and parties, food, and fun, all centered on the collective identity of the school, of the town, and of the people there. It's a celebration of unity and hope.

This reading is a kind of homecoming for the people of Israel and Judah - certainly a celebration was happening, and we see David, anointed to be king over all of Israel - a big deal since the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been separated from the

southern kingdom of Judah. David dances as the ark of the covenant comes into the city of Jerusalem. But before we get into that - some background on the book of Samuel, which was written originally as one book, likely a compilation of writings from several authors, who told the story of a great time of change in Israel's history. There were the twelve tribes, spread out over the land, learning how to survive together in their new home. They asked for a King, and God granted their request, which led to the beginning of the monarchy. David was a great-grandson of Ruth; his father Jesse was the son of Ruth's son, Obed. David is the youngest son in a large family, and lived and worked as a shepherd, later becoming a leader in King Saul's army. These times were full of division; Saul was jealous of David, and tried to get rid of anyone who was not loyal to him. But David was chosen by God to be the future king - he was loved by Saul's daughter Michal, and very close to his son Jonathan, who was killed in battle. David becomes King over Judah, the southern kingdom, where he ruled for 7 and a half years, gaining in power and popularity. After Saul's death, David is chosen to be King over all of Israel.

It was God who chose to make a great nation out of Abraham. It was God who moved Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. It was the God who chose David to be King. The story of David in scripture is the continuation of the story of God's action in the world and God's promises coming true. *True power comes from God.* God blesses Israel to be a light to the nations, God leads people from slavery into freedom. God reaffirms the promise through David. David would be the hope of all the people, a sign that God was ruling among them again, through the anointed King. The first thing David does is move into Jerusalem. It's a city strategically located in between the north

and south. He defeats the army of the Jebusites, who were there - and calls it the *City of David* - making Jerusalem the capital and joining the north and south together as one Kingdom. The civil war was ended and the tribes would be united once again.

Well, hearing that Israel had a new King, the Philistines attacked, David defeated them - with God's help of course - and gained back the ark of the covenant. In the ark, a wooden box decorated with gold there was Aaron's rod - it grew flowers and almonds to signify that the tribe of Levi would be the priestly tribe. There was also jar of manna from the time when God provided food in the desert. The ark carried the tablets of the law given to Moses - the ten commandments - the word of the Lord. They were with Israel when they wandered in the desert and when they came into the land God promised them. It was understood to be the power of God with the people of Israel. The power of God is the Word of God, and the Word was coming home to Israel.

It's a powerful thing. so powerful, that they couldn't even look at it. They had sheets covering it, and when Uzzah (a son of Abinadab) reached over to steady the ark, he was killed. He was unprepared, ritually unclean, and unable to handle it.

There's something about God's word that can seem mysterious or overwhelming to us. If we think we don't understand it, we might just not even attempt to read it, we think we need some special knowledge, or education to get into the Word, we might even fear it will challenge or change us and we don't particularly want to be confronted with it at times. There *is* power in the Word, and the ark was a symbol of God's power. Bringing it to Jerusalem would mean that God's real presence was there in the city with the people. Jerusalem would be the center of Israel's political power, and a religious

center as well. God was again at the center, and David was God's anointed, chosen, and blessed King.

The presence of God is back among the people.

The Word has come home.

So what does David do?

He dances! And the people dance with him!

He drops his robes, and brings the ark into the city with a dramatic procession, and the homecoming parade of *thirty-thousand people* brings hope and joy and music along with it. David dances in a linen ephod - a priestly garment - it could be a robe, but more likely was about the size of a *dish towel*. The anointed King abandons decorum, and dances with joy for the glory of the Lord as the Word is processed to a place of honor. Not a temple yet, but a tent in a high place.

Can you imagine that kind of joy?

Maybe you felt that when you graduated high school or college, on your wedding day, at the birth of a child, or when your team won the championship. Maybe you remember King David in the movie version - from 1985, Richard Gere giving one of his best performances, as he dances before the ark. Leaping, jumping, without a thought to his status or stature, in the presence of all the people, the royal court, the priests, his family, adults, and children. His dance is an act of worship, and the music accompanies him, giving glory to God, with ecstatic praise!

Do we celebrate like that to know that God's presence is with us?

But God is here - with us as the Word is proclaimed. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that "the proclaimed word is the Christ himself walking through his congregation as the

Word.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus is here with you, in the power of the Holy Spirit through faith, as *you hear* the good news of forgiveness and peace and abundant joy in Jesus - the King of Kings, who died that you would have abundant life, and who is risen from the dead and is with you always.

We make a joyful noise as we sing, as we play instruments in this place, and we can clap and cheer to know that Jesus is here! We can have joy, you Lutherans!

Jesus promises it!

The same Jesus takes his place as the anointed one, riding into Jerusalem generations later - a shoot from the stump of Jesse, descendant of David’s royal house - on the back of a colt. He rides into Jerusalem, in a procession of the true King of the World, with joy and shouts of hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! The real presence of God is in Jesus, the Lord. The Word is with us! God’s chosen son is here!

David would rule over Israel for 40 years.

He wasn’t perfect. he made more than his share of mistakes. Yet, with him, God proved faithful to keep the promise. God chose him and used him. The power of the Word was with him and with Israel, and is with us. The power of God that was with David is with us through the Word. we come to hear it, sing it, and eat it! We gather around the table each week here in what truly is a joyful foretaste of the feast to come, when all are together, united in Christ in the heavenly kingdom.

Because of Jesus we can live with hope, for that ultimate future homecoming, and live fully present here and now, with peace and joy, knowing that the Word is

---

<sup>1</sup> *Worldly Preaching*, 126; see <http://www.withearstohear.org/listening-with-bonhoeffer.html>

everlasting, not kept in a box, but bursting forth in the world, in pulpits and pews, in homes, and in our hearts. Jesus is with us, and that is really powerful. We have grace, peace, and forgiveness in Him, now and always. So strike up the band! Sing! Shout! Praise Him all you people! Amen!