

SERMON FOR APRIL 10, 2022

TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 32; 36-39

THEME: A SONG TO SING

For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free. **37** Then he will say, 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, **38** who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection! **39** "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

In the name of Jesus:

Today is a day for singing! Palm Sunday, the Sunday right before Easter, is a day filled with song. In the Gospel processional for this day, we read: the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. **13** So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" The hymns today reflect the truth that Palm Sunday is a day for singing: "Hosanna loud hosanna the little children sang!" And so we join the chorus and sing a song that reflects the love that Jesus has for us, and the love we have for Jesus.

God's people have always been people who sing songs of joy. Miriam sang a song of joy right after Moses led the people through the Red Sea on dry

land. And today in our Old Testament lesson, Moses sings a song, and what a song he sings!

The song Moses sings is one that gives praise to the Lord. Why? Because, as Moses sings: “The Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants when He sees that their power is gone.” The Lord will vindicate His people. To vindicate means to clear a person of blame. And God’s people have plenty of blame to go around and to share. God was merciful to His people of old. He called them out of slavery in Egypt and God led them through the wilderness to the Promised Land. God continued to be merciful and have compassion on His own, by providing for them food and water, by leading them with a pillar of fire and cloud of glory, and now at the time of Moses’ singing, they were on the doorsteps of entering the Promised Land. Yes, God continued to bless and guide His people, so in Moses’ song there is much to be thankful for.

And yet, Moses in his singing also remembers the response of God’s people when receiving God’s blessings. When they reached the other side of the Red Sea, many complained that all that was in front of them was wilderness and nothingness. During their journey, they complained about the food and water that God provided, they even complained about Moses and his

leadership. In spite of God's mercy and love, God's people rejected God and His mercy. They were dissatisfied with God and His love, so that they made a golden calf to worship at the foot of Mt. Sinai and their hearts sought solace in and they placed their faith in idols which do not live and did not deliver them in their distress. That is why Moses sings: "Then he will say, 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, **38** who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection!"

Moses knows and understands that it was the Lord and Him alone who gave birth to His people, who provided for His people and who saved His people. And that is why the Lord gets the glory and praise that He alone deserves. So Moses sings: **39** "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand." The Lord is the One who delivers and saves. To Him alone be all honor and glory.

As Moses sings this song, so too we also have a song to sing. The Lord has vindicated you! For the Lord has made you His own and made you a member of His Kingdom. The Lord God loves you with an everlasting love, delivering you from the power of sin, Satan, and death, not as a result of

anything you could do or have done. You have been saved by a free gift of God's love in Jesus Christ. Christ is your Deliverer. He is your Savior. He is your ever present Help in times of trouble. He has washed away your sins in the waters of your Baptism. He daily and richly forgives you all of your sins and leads you through this wilderness to the Promised Land of heaven. Jesus provides for your every need, giving you your family, your home, all that you possess. Jesus does all this for you and more! You and I have every reason to sing praise to the Lord for He is good, His mercy lasts forever.

But you and I are just like those who have gone before us. In spite of God's blessings which are new every morning, we are at our core an unfaithful people. Our words at times betray our love for the Lord, when we bitterly complain about our circumstances, when we worry and fret about what we don't have, and when we lash out in anger at another with sarcasm and unloving, even hateful speech. We seek out idols to satisfy our needs when we think that more money will solve our problems and when we trust in ourselves to solve the problems that beset us. We make idols of our own making when we chalk things up to good luck and when we believe that karma evens the playing field.

Like Moses' song we sing the refrain that these gods of our own making are of no help to us. The earthly wealth and materials we possess have no power to save. These gods continually disappoint and fail to deliver. But as we see in Moses' song, our God continues to forgive and deliver us.

Moses sings of the Lord: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand." Even when everything has fallen apart in our lives, there is only One who comes to heal, to deliver and save. He is the One who comes in humility, riding on the back of a donkey, on the city streets into the city of Jerusalem. He is the One, Jesus, who saves, who was betrayed in the Garden, found guilty of crimes He did not commit, and who was crucified on a cross between two thieves. He is the One, Jesus, who comes to save, who laid down his life for the sins of all. He is the One who vindicates you and each and every sinner. You are baptized in His name. His blood covers all of your sins. You are declared not guilty and forgiven of all of your sins in the courts of the Lord. In the midst of your misery and despair, God's Good News to you is that He has sent Jesus to be your Savior. He goes to Calvary to die for you. He comes to you today in His Word and Sacrament to forgive and to bless. And like Moses, this Good News moves us to sing praise to Him who lived,

died, and now lives forever! Jesus loves you. He is faithful. He is the Lamb of God who has come, to take away your sin and to bless you all the days of your life. To Him be all glory, honor and praise!

Amen