

SERMON FOR PALM SUNDAY

APRIL 2, 2023

TEXT; JOHN 12:13

THEME: HOSANNA

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!"

In the name of Jesus:

Everyone loves a parade! Just look at the people who turn out for the Lancaster parades: both the 4th of July and Christmas parades begin at the Fairgrounds, they are two miles in length, and the parade is so long that those at the front of the parade can complete the parade route before the back end of the parade even has a chance to begin! The streets are lined with people, children plead for candy to be thrown in their direction. Parades are joyful and fun times. Everyone loves a parade.

On that first Palm Sunday, people came from miles around. Hundreds of thousands of Jews and Jewish pilgrims filled the streets of Jerusalem. It was a mob of people, all assembled because the holiest time of the Jewish year was a little less than a week away, it was the Passover. People preparing for family gatherings and the Passover Meal. People were ready to celebrate, and as they were readying to celebrate, they were also talking, and the topic of the conversation was Jesus.

Just the day before Jesus had done the greatest miracle that He had ever done, He called Lazarus from the tomb, and Jesus raised the stone cold dead Lazarus to life again. And that is not all, as Jesus was coming into town He healed two blind men, who now could see. News of Jesus spread, the people were excited. Could this be the long awaited King?

The people lined the streets. They wanted to see Jesus. Some wanted to see Jesus thinking that if He was able to perform a miracle on Lazarus or the blind men, then what in the world might He do for me?

And yet there was another group of people, who thought Jesus could be the long awaited King that would restore Israel to worldwide prominence once again. They weren't looking for a miracle, they were looking for a revolution. These people were tired of being ruled by someone else. They were tired of Roman rule and wanted to make Israel an independent nation once again, much like David did in the Old Testament. These Jews hated the Romans because they believed that they were unclean. And the Romans in turn hated the Jews. They viewed them as rabble rousers and trouble makers. It had all the makings of a political powder keg that was about ready to explode. That is why there had been 32 political uprisings and riots in the area

for the past five years. The people were fed up with the Romans and tired of Roman rule, and these people looked to Jesus as a political Savior of sorts.

And so, when Jesus comes riding into Jerusalem, both groups are singing HOSANNA, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna means save us. One group crying out to Jesus to save us from political oppression, and yet another group crying out to Jesus to save us from our physical ailments and maladies.

Oh, Jesus was indeed coming into Jerusalem, riding on the back of a donkey, to save His people, but He was a different kind of Savior and a different kind of King. He didn't come as a sugar daddy to give you everything you want in life. He didn't come as a magic genie, so that if you believe in Him your every wish would come true. And Jesus didn't ride into Jerusalem to start a political uprising, or to bring about another great nation like Israel was during the days of David. No, Jesus is a different kind of King. His Kingdom is not of this world. Jesus is the King sent from God the Father to save His people. But how will He save His people?

God sent Jesus, His only Son, to usher in God's Kingdom. But Jesus doesn't look like a typical king. He doesn't even look like the Son of God. He lived His life without sin, but He had no halo around His head. As Isaiah

foretold: “He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him and no beauty that we should desire Him.” And so Jesus rides on the back of a donkey into Jerusalem not to be worshiped, but to die. Jesus Himself said that the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. Jesus is the King who loves you so much that He willingly dies the damnable death in your place. He is the chosen One of God, the Messiah, the Lamb of God who takes away your sin.

Jesus came not to rule in power and might, rather He came to rule in love, giving Himself as a ransom for many. At His crucifixion people recoiled at the thought of Jesus being a King. There was a sign over nailed to the cross proclaiming Jesus, King of the Jews. “Take down that sign, “the people cried out, “He is not our King!’ But Pilate remained steadfast: What I have written, I have written.”

God is even more steadfast than Pilate. For God has said:” My word shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” God has loved you with an everlasting love, so much so that He sent you a Savior.

The people on the parade route that day sang praise to Jesus, calling out to Jesus to save them. And God answered their calls by sending His one and only Son, Jesus, who was paraded to the cross on Good Friday for the sins of

the world. And this is how a person can be saved because the Bible says: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Gospel.” For “the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” “For He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

In Baptism you have been made a child of the Father, a citizen of the Kingdom of God, not by works, but by faith. “Your citizenship is in heaven, and from it you await your Savior, Jesus Christ.” Jesus is your Savior, who loves you with an everlasting love. Jesus loves you and forgives you. He is always willing and able not only to hear your prayers but to answer them as well. He is with you always, there in your most troubling times, to silence your fears. Jesus is at work today, working all things out to your good because He loves you.

Jesus is your Savior, now and always. So how then should you live your life to honor Him? “**5** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **9** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the

name that is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Amen