

Sunday, April 14, 2019  
Psalm 118 837 VU  
Luke 19:28-40

### Shout Hosanna

Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of God! We have been saying and singing these words this morning but what do they mean? Why is this Palm Sunday celebration filled with Hosannas and Blessings to Jesus? What does it mean to share in the palm parade as a Christian!

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week where shouts of joy are shared to Jesus as he makes his way from a village to the city of Jerusalem. It marks his entrance into the city as the king of kings yet all this does is mark the beginning of his public presence in the city as the teacher, preacher, healer and the Son of God. Jesus is no longer just hanging around the synagogue. His following is getting larger and larger. Crowds of thousands want to hear him, be healed by him, and forgiven of their sin. His preaching is touching their minds but mostly their hearts as they see how much he loves them. But Jesus knows that his purpose in life is more than the work of the preacher and healer; he is to die to rise again. Through this Jesus will make it possible for death to be conquered and life to be eternal by his death and resurrection. And so this Holy Week begins with joy and wonder. Words and pleas of “save us and blessings” are words which Christians have adopted through the ages and we are reminded of their use today and throughout our everyday life.

Earlier in the day Jesus sent two of the disciples to the village to borrow a donkey. When the disciples find the donkey the owners asked why they were untying this animal and without any hesitation, the owners allow them to take it to Jesus just outside the community. They brought this animal to Jesus in order to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah about what would take place. Zechariah declared “Tell the daughter of Zion, Look your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” So when the disciples borrow the donkey Jesus sent them to get, it is for the purpose of fulfilling prophecy. Jesus knew that as the King and Lord, he was to ride a donkey into the city of Jerusalem.

When the disciples return to Jesus with the donkey, they put their cloaks upon the colt and then Jesus gets up and sits upon the animal. As they walk along the street of the

village and approach the city then come near to the Mount of Olives and into the street of Jerusalem, people see who is on the donkey and they are moved with the excitement of seeing Jesus and cover the ground with their cloaks. This enables the donkey carrying Jesus to walk on a clearly defined path made by them. A path which sees Jesus begin as the teacher, preacher and healer leading into the city where he would die and be the Saviour. As Jesus moves from the village, and approaches the Mount of Olives he knows that he will pray and be arrested there. But in the meantime, he is waving to the people who are filled with joy and wonder; who are shouting Hosanna to Jesus. It is in these moments as he enters this area that the whole multitude of his followers are praising God with joyful songs and shouting and sharing about the many deeds of power that they had seen Jesus do. They shouted with joy "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest."

The people are filled with joy as they see the one they now trust and love for what he has done to change their lives and Jesus is riding on the donkey with dignity and in public. He is no longer just in the common areas of the synagogue teaching, or by the lake sharing parables, he is not seeing people to heal and doing that. But simply, Jesus is riding and receiving the wishes for being helped and the blessings they bestow on him as he passes by. There are many people following Jesus and shouting with joy the wonders Jesus has done for them. There is much noise and activity as people are climbing up palm trees, cutting down branches, placing them on the road ahead of Jesus and the donkey or waving them as banners, as signs to those who do not know Jesus that this is their king who rides. A lot of noise is being created and the crowd seems to be getting larger and more excited. There is much joy on the faces of Jesus' followers but the Pharisees don't see this. They only see that Jesus' following is much larger than they think and they foretell an uprising to come. They don't like what is occurring as they seem to be losing their hold upon the people.

The Pharisees have joined the crowds not to support Jesus and this walk into Jerusalem as the king, but are present watching what he will do next. They are not there to shout Hosanna but instead yell at Jesus to order the disciples to stop. But Jesus knows that this parade is not only for him to be seen in the streets and recognized by the people he is seen by his followers who trust him. So Jesus enables the parade to proceed.

He hears the people shout, "Hosanna in the highest" as he is acknowledged as the promised One, a descendant of David and the ultimate sacrifice. But what does this means for us about 2000 years later? And for humanity as a whole—this will only be revealed in time.

As we come together on this Palm Sunday we sing out our praise and shout "Hosanna" This word may not be something we often say out loud, but we may reflect on it and feel it in our hearts and in times of worship about how Jesus might help you or save in these moments. Maybe in your quiet place of prayer, you may find the comfort you need just saying these forms of hosanna out loud!

But to be understood we must realize that there are two completely different uses for "hosanna." One use is pleading for help, while the other is just showing gratitude for what was done. From Psalm 118:25 we might interpret this "hosanna" as "Please, Lord please save us. Please give us success." But in the next verse 26, there is a shift from concern to confidence "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." So how do we know the difference in the meaning? It comes to the point of faith and a demonstration of the shift from Old Testament to New Testament understanding. Both perfectly represent two separate places of spiritual well-being we might find ourselves. I want to emphasize that these are two separate places. One is not better than the other and one is not a level to reach the other. They are just two different places -- we are either crying out to God for help, or we are thanking God for what has been done for us. But no matter what, we are in a better position, as a result.

Cry out for help vs thanking God for what has been done for us.

As we reflect on Jesus' trek into Jerusalem we must remember that he is going very slowly, people are seeing him as they stop their working and they hear the crowds shouting. Many would not know who he is but those who follow him will tell the message that needs to be shared. He is Jesus, the Promised One, the Messiah and he is preparing to save them all.

There were many who did not know him, yet many more who put their lives into his trusting care. They knew that their lives mattered to him that sins would be forgiven, that they were given hope when they did not receive it before.

Maybe you are in this position? You know a little about Jesus? You might even go along with the crowd and shout Hosanna because you want to praise Him for what he has done to help others.

Or maybe you are in a position where you see Jesus riding into Jerusalem and pleading that he should not go because he will die. Yet Jesus' purpose on earth was to live, to die and rise again—for our sakes. And instead of seeing Jesus as the one who was to die on a cross for us, you see Jesus obedient to His Father and fulfilling the prophecies as the One in whom all people should entrust their lives. Maybe you are in a position to plead—"Save me/save us"

Or maybe we just remember the story and now offer praise and worship to Christ for we know that he came riding on the donkey to fulfill prophecy and begin the week of teaching and telling the disciples to be prepared for his death. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the One whom comes in the name of God. There might be no real connection or there is a connection that you might not want to acknowledge. Jesus' disciples did not stay awake or be on watch while he prayed in the Mount of Olive before he was arrested. Did they not know what was going to happen? They knew of the betrayal but when push comes to show they ran in fear? I wonder if we would do the same knowing the full story? Would we deny him? Or hide in fear? Would we even be at the foot of the cross like John, Mary Magdalene and Mary, Jesus' mother?

No matter where you are in this spectrum—"Save me" to offering Praise and Adoration we can all approach God through prayer or worship the same. When we are at that place of feeling like we are failing or like we can't go on, we can plead with God, "Please, hear me! Please, talk to me. Please, show me something new." For you are Christ and I believe- help my unbelief.

And if we are feeling connected with God and feel like we are overflowing with love and blessings we can shout praises: "Thank you, God! You are so good! Thank you for my life! Thank you for making a way for me!" This too is also proper use of hosanna. Today we shout them both—for all our sakes- and to remember Jesus in this Holy Week filled with passion and Love. Let us rejoice and sing "HOSANNA< LOUD HOSANNA! In faith and with hope.