

Sunday, March 20, 2016

Hebrews 10:19-25, 11:1

Luke 22:1-13, 39-52

Jesus is Greater...Therefore Shout Hosanna

Excitement is in the air—the robins are singing, the grass is turning green, there is mud in puddles and it is spring! And with spring we celebrate new life and new hope for the year ahead. But there is also excitement for other reasons today—it is Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week. But why are we or should we be excited about Palm Sunday or Holy Week? What is the big deal about all this anyway? And what does singing and shouting Hosanna mean for us today when it was over 2000 years ago when Jesus entered into Jerusalem on that donkey?

As we continue to look at the book of Hebrews and learn more about the greatness of Jesus- being one with God the Father and Spirit, both divine and human, above the angels and above our faithful ancestors we need to look at what Jesus did by going to Jerusalem and offering himself so our sake so that we can have something/ someone to believe in.

What do you believe? In who do you believe and place your trust? Many people today cannot answer these questions because there is an uncertainty which abides within them. Many have not experienced the presence of God from within and when the name of Jesus is spoken there is flinching as it is considered cursing. Yet when we look at Jesus there is so much more to this Son of God, Human Healer than what we might first understand. Jesus is the one in which we are to place our faith because it is in Christ alone that we receive the gift, hope and promise of eternal life and the forgiveness of sins. Who is Jesus the one who rode on the donkey with people laughing, shouting and screaming—Hosanna Save us?

People had heard about this man who healed, who taught and was called “lord” Those who had been sent ahead to get a donkey upon which Jesus would ride only had to say “The Lord needs it”. Jesus was known in the communities of Bethphage and Bethany. He had been known to teach others and many had listened and wanted to hear more about his message. The donkey was brought to Jesus and a parade into the city was now being prepared. People spread their cloaks on the road, waved palm branches and shouted in loud voices as they praised God. They had seen miracles and now they knew something was to occur with this man the teacher for he had said he would save them. Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.”They shouted and were filled with joy. They

drew near to Jesus because they thought he might be able to save them. They were not totally convinced but they were rejoicing and shouting praises.

I wonder if you would have gone along the parade route that day or even today when we remember how excited everyone was that Jesus was going into Jerusalem. Yet not everyone was pleased. The Pharisees witnessed the crowd and the following that Jesus had and even some of them told Jesus to tell the people to be quiet. But Jesus only answered that if the people stopped shouting, the rocks would cry out.. He knew that this ride into Jerusalem had been a part of what the Father had in mind as preparations were made for the Passover and eventually Jesus' death.

We read in Hebrews 10 how important it is to have faith. What is faith? According to Hebrews 11:1 It is 'being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.' Sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

The people shouting Hosanna as Jesus rode into Jerusalem had hope that Jesus would and could do something for them: miracles were great and he spoke well. But they were uncertain of their faith. They drew near to Jesus that day but not with sincerity of heart. They do not hold to the hope as they profess Hosanna for by the end of the week they join with the cries to crucify Jesus.

But through faith we are to believe that Jesus did save us—the Hosanna shouts did ring true; Jesus died to save us from death, pain, hurt and even more, Jesus enabled us to live eternally with him. But not everyone is convinced of this nor do people wish to see themselves in the story of his passion because it means making a statement, a profession of faith, of believing and having faith and living it out every day.

As Jesus rode the donkey children and adults alike were excited to see Jesus doing something different. They had heard of the miracles he had performed including the raising of a dead man. But they were just glad of his presence in their community as he made his way to the city. If they had known the prophecy according to Zechariah 9:9 they would recognize Jesus as the messianic king who would bring peace. As Zechariah prophesied the king would come gently and riding on a donkey as the chariots and war horses would be taken from Jerusalem and this king will proclaim peace, ruling from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. And this king is Jesus.

Through the generations since this occurred each Palm Sunday it is by faith we draw near to the story of Jesus; we shout and sing Hosanna and offer praises to God because we believe in this Son of God who is both human and divine and whose love was unconditional and sacrificial that we are saved through him and given the gift and promise of eternal life. As we come together this Palm Sunday let us be filled with love and have a sincere heart filled with hope and with faith that Jesus still comes and save us when we call upon him. Let us also come together knowing that in faith we can share in what he has asked us to do in remembrance of his loving and giving act at the table and on the cross. Let us come to this table and believe in the One who comes in the name of the Lord knowing that by faith he comes for us.

Jesus came so that we might have faith and believe in him. For we know he believed and loved all those who would follow him. He prayed and was strengthened by angels; he prayed more earnestly in the mount of Olives and he knew what would soon occur. But what about you? Do you have faith in this Jesus who is greater than all who went before us and angels and leaders and everyone else? Do you have faith in him as Saviour, Lord, and redeemer? And are you shouting—Hosanna! Save Me? Jesus is hearing you as you pray, and sing and shout. He hears and knows what is in your heart and wants you to see him for who he is. A man, the Son of God, the teacher, healer and friend. It is his body and his blood which we receive through the new covenant he established with all his people. Do you have faith to meet him again—then Shout Hosanna! He hears you and listens. As we pray together.

PRAYER

Jesus you have heard us as we shout and sing Hosanna/ Save us from our sins and show us who we ought to be in faith and with hope. By faith we believe enable us to grow in faith as we seek our way in this world. We pray that as we enter this Holy Week that you would open our hearts and minds to the story of Jesus- as Saviour and Lord. Be with us O God as we strive to grow in faith. Hear us O God we pray. Amen.