

**PALM SUNDAY – April 8 & 9, 2006**  
**St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church – Watertown, WI**

**HOSANNA!**

Today is an important day in the life of Jesus Christ and the history of the Christian church. It's Palm Sunday. It is the day when our Lord Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem humbly on a donkey as the King of Israel. The crowds in the city welcomed him. They laid their garments on the way in front of him and others cut branches from trees and placed them in his path. They shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David." It was a victory parade. In fact, it caused quite a stir in Jerusalem. Thousands of people were there from throughout the Roman Empire. For Jews from everywhere had come home to celebrate the Passover. This was the festival when they remembered how God had delivered and rescued their people from the oppression and slavery they had in Egypt during the days of Moses. Now the crowds were screaming, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" What did that mean? The word hosanna is a Hebrew word which means, "Save now, O Lord". What were these people implying by their cry "Save now, O Lord"? What did they mean by calling Jesus the Son of David? Matthew tells us that this caused quite a stir throughout the entire city of Jerusalem. People were asking questions. They wanted to know what was going on and who was this person riding on a donkey into the capital city of the people of God. The crowds told those who wanted to know, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." (v. 11)

As we focus our attention for a few minutes on this fateful event in the life of our Savior, I want to consider with you the shout of the people who welcomed Jesus in to Jerusalem that day – **HOSANNA!** As we ponder what they were saying by their cry we need to consider **I) Their Ideas On Salvation and Our Own.** Then as we watch Jesus marvel at **II) God's Plan.**

**THEIR IDEAS ON SALVATION AND OUR OWN**

"Save now, O God." "Hosanna to the Son of David." What did the people mean as they chanted these words and Jesus humbly rode into Jerusalem on that donkey? What were these people expecting from Jesus? Whom did they assume that he was?

Whom did the people assume Jesus was? They called him the Son of David. They hailed him as a king. The only other time in the Gospel of Matthew before this event where Jesus is referred to as a king was when he was born. Remember when the magi from the east came to worship the Christ child, they referred to him as king and we are told that Herod was disturbed and so was all of Jerusalem. Now when Jesus enters Jerusalem and is hailed as a king, all of Jerusalem is disturbed and upset again. Did they understand what kind of king he was and what his kingdom would be? Probably not. Even Jesus' own disciples did not grasp the significance of these events or what this kingdom of God was all about until after Pentecost. And even then it was a continual learning process for them as they began to understand that Jesus' kingdom also included the Gentile world as well as the Jews.

What were the people expecting from Jesus as they cried out Hosanna? Did they truly understand what they were asking? The Jewish idea of salvation was deliverance from political and military oppressors. For Jews who still are expecting a Savior that is still the concept. It is the idea that Jesus will make Israel a great a powerful nation and he will rule from Jerusalem as did King David. No longer will the people of God be subject to any foreign power or outside rule. There are many evangelicals in our country who also have the same view of Jesus' kingdom and his rule.

How often don't we sort of expect God to do the same thing? Free us from the problems and troubles of life. Make our life here carefree and wonderful. Deliver us from every disease, every financial difficulty, every disappointment, every conflict and disagreement. We want a paradise on this earth here and now.

Also the manner in which God is to accomplish this should be showy and dramatic. We want to see our enemies struck down before our eyes. We want to see him come rolling in with his angelic armies and just crush all those who oppose him and show who's boss.

Just like the people in Jerusalem that first Palm Sunday, we often don't get the picture. We don't see how God works and conquers. It is not through big and dramatic displays of power, but rather quietly and humbly through the power of his Word and through events and happenings that often appear to us as defeat rather than victory. Let's marvel at God's plan as we look at Jesus.

## **GOD'S PLAN**

The manner in which Jesus entered Jerusalem that Palm Sunday already is indicative of the manner in which God plans to rescue and save the human race. Matthew notes that the events of this day were in fulfillment of prophecy. He quotes from the prophecy of Zechariah which had been written about 480 years before the birth of Jesus. Zechariah speaks of the events of Palm Sunday when he writes, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem. See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle (or humble) and riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey." (Zechariah 9:9) Consider the manner in which Jesus entered into Jerusalem. Here is the King and Creator of the universe. He does not come charging in a white stallion surrounded by armies of men. He comes in lowly and meekly riding on a donkey, a beast of burden. He had told his followers a number of times that he was going up to Jerusalem to be handed over to his enemies and to suffer, die and on the third day to rise again.

The manner in which Jesus planned to rescue and save us was bizarre also. How can someone save others by being rejected, ridiculed and murdered? That is not how we probably would have worked this out but as God says to us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord." (Isaiah 55:9)

What the people cried out, Hosanna! (Save now, O Lord) actually is what Jesus was entering Jerusalem to do. He was coming into Jerusalem as a King to rescue the human race. Isn't it ironic that five days later some of these same people were screaming "Crucify him! Crucify him? Remember even Pontius Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your king?" Their response was, "We have no king but Caesar." Yet five days earlier they were hailing Jesus as the Son of David, their king. But all this was to fulfill what God had prophesied. This was the manner in which the King of Israel would save the human race.

Jesus the Son of God is your Savior and mine. He rescued us by his innocent life, his agonizing death on that cross and his triumphant resurrection from the grave three days later. Even the manner in which that salvation is personally brought to you and me is not very spectacular and attention grabbing. For many of us we were rescued as infants, when water was poured on us and someone said, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." No bells ringing and whistles blowing. Or when Jesus personally comes to us in Holy Communion. He comes in the simple elements of bread and wine. Yet he gives us his true body and blood and grants us forgiveness and eternal life. This is the manner in which our God works. It is not spectacular fireworks displays. It is quietly and humbly through the power of his almighty Word.

As we begin our travel through holy week again, remember the words of the crowd, Hosanna! Remember they were asking the Lord to save them now. Then remember that what they requested Jesus accomplished. It may not have been the type of rescue they were thinking of. But it was a better deliverance. A deliverance that lasts forever. It is a rescue that gives meaning to our existence now and it assures us of an everlasting rescue in God's heavenly kingdom forever. For the Son of David, Jesus Christ, the Son of God has saved us from the eternal punishment of our sins and secured for us an eternal home in heaven.

Amen.

## **Hosanna!**

### **I. Their ideas on salvation and ours**

- A. Who did the people assume Jesus was?
- B. What were the people expecting?
- C. What do we expect from the Lord?
- D. How do we expect God to do things?
- E. We are often like the people in Jerusalem

### **II. God's plan**

- A. the manner in which Jesus entered the city –  
humbly
- B. the manner in which Jesus planned to rescue
- C. The manner in which God comes to us to save us
- D. Remember these words this week & always

**“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem. See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle (or humble) and riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey.”**