

“Hosanna!” the crowds shouted...or more properly, according to the Hebrew, **“Hoshianna!”** **“Save us now!”** **THREE WORDS OF TRUTH: “SAVE US NOW!”**

Lent 06 (Palm Sunday) – April 14, 2019 (s759.doc)

Shout to the Lord – 131 – Crown Him – 747

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As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “Say to the Daughter of Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest!”

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.” –Matthew 21:1-11

Long ago, on a dark night in the Galilean town of Nazareth, an angel appeared to a troubled young man named Joseph. [blank screen]

He was engaged to a woman named Mary, but it had become clear that Mary was pregnant, and Joseph was heartbroken. He had in mind to call off the marriage...but he loved Mary and was determined to do it quietly. That’s when God sent an angel to deliver an important message: *“Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife,”* the angel explained, *“because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”* *“She will give birth to a son,”* he added, *“and you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.”* (Matthew 1:20,21).

*“You are to give him the name **Jesus**,”* the angel said. Joseph was to give him the Greek form of the name **YESHUA**, or **Joshua**—**“the Lord saves.”**

Years later, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, cries of *“Hosanna”* filled the air. We don’t make the connection in our minds; the name *Jesus* and the word *Hosanna* seem to be totally unrelated. But if we look a little deeper, we can see a very important connection. **“Save us now!”**—in English, these three little words sum up everything Jesus came to do.

During the season of Lent we have been looking at three-word phrases that tell us something significant about Jesus’ work as our Redeemer. It is fitting that the children began our worship by singing *“Hosanna!”* so enthusiastically. It is fitting that this shout went out as Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem that day. And it is fitting that, as we enter our celebration of Holy Week, we consider these **three words of truth**:

“SAVE US NOW!” – “HOSANNA!”

This phrase expresses...

- 1. Our need as sinners**
- 2. Our purpose as Christians**

It was a day unlike any other in the life of our Lord. [blank screen]

From the village of Bethany, Jesus set out with his disciples for the city of Jerusalem. He knew exactly what lay in store for him; he was riding to his death. Going to Jerusalem would put him within reach of his enemies...and it would result in his arrest, his trial, and his crucifixion. That was the next step in God’s plan. It would be agonizing...and yet Jesus set his eyes on the goal—to give his life as a ransom for all.

Jesus knew what lay in store...but if his disciples had no idea, the crowds were even more clueless. It was Passover. It was a time to celebrate—a time for the Jews to rejoice in their national heritage. Like the 4th of July, it was a time for them to express their patriotic pride.

As he drew closer to the city, the crowds grew. They shouted, *“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”* *“Hosanna to the Son of David....Hosanna in the highest!”* (Matthew 21:9). We thrill to hear the welcoming voices...but we also know that by the end of the week, they will have changed their tune. *“He is worthy of death!”* they will cry (Matthew 26:66). *“Crucify him!”* they will shout. *“Let his blood be on us and on our children!”* (Matthew 27:23,25). Many of those who cried *“Hosanna”* likely did so with enthusiastic mouths...but unbelieving hearts. They honored him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him...

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Perhaps you’ve noticed: a lot of people today have that same concept of faith—all talk; no substance. They will claim to be “religious” or “spiritual” ...but what does that *mean*? In America today it seems to mean, “I get to choose my own truth.” “I can create my own god and make my own rules.” “My religion is not about **God** telling *me* what’s right and true. No. My religion is all about *me* doing *my* life *my* way.” As long as you’re passionate about it, you’re good.

You see the problem with that, don’t you? You can’t go through life imagining yourself to be “religious” when your “religion” fails to take into account **God and his truth**... In reality, that kind of “spirituality” does nothing more than make a “god” of one’s self.

But before we conclude that we’re superior and say, “Thank God I’m not like that,” let’s consider how we fabricate our own religion, too. Aren’t there times when we come for reasons other than to be set straight by God? We come to feel good.... or to watch the kids... or we go through the motions of religion because “that’s what we do.” We honor God with our lips, **but our hearts are not in it.**

You see, you can’t just have a *feeling* about something and imagine that you have *faith*. You need to trust in something that is rock solid and hold on to it. And that’s what God has done—**something rock solid**. Today is a good day to remember that. As we celebrate the Lord’s Supper on Thursday, it’s good for us to remember that Jesus suffered and died for the forgiveness of our sins. As we gather for worship on Good Friday, it’s good for us to remember that it’s not all about the kids. As we celebrate Easter, it will be good for us to remember that it’s not about the breakfast, or the tradition, or the clothes people are wearing...

No, it’s about something far more important than all that.

Don’t just shout **at** the King like the Palm Sunday crowds. Send up your prayers **to** our King. There’s a difference. To shout *“Hosanna”*—*“Save us now”*—to the King means to know that he is the only way to everlasting life and without him I’m lost. To shout *“Hosanna”* to the King means to confess your sins and recognize the punishment you really deserve. To shout *“Hosanna”* to the King means to come to him in heartfelt faith and plead, ***“Save me now! I need you, Lord Jesus.”***

There on the cross hangs the answer to the problem of sin—the only chance we have of everlasting life. There is Jesus. He rode into Jerusalem to suffer and die for you. Cry out to him. Pour out your heart to him with your pain, your hurt, your confusion, your heartache. Come to him with your fears, your doubts, your sins and iniquities. He says, “I am your King. Sinner, I came for you.” Shout ***“Hosanna”*** to Jesus.

That phrase, ***“Save us now,”*** is a phrase that expresses our need. We **need** a Savior. But it’s also a way of life, a blueprint for life; it expresses our **purpose** for living as Christians. We need to have a purpose for living...and Jesus fills that need. So many in the world—even among those we know—are hungry and thirsting for the message of God’s love. You and I are in a position to give it to them. ***“Save us now!”*** is the plea of their hearts. They are the reason our Lord came and the reason God has put us here on earth.

You see, we're not here simply to see if we can find a way to get cows to produce more milk, or to figure out how to make better snow blowers, or to achieve something on the court. No. We have a greater purpose than that. We're here to share the message of Christ crucified for sinners. We're here to tell sinners, ***"Jesus saves."***

Later this week, Jesus would stand before Pontius Pilate and say, *"My kingdom is not of this world"* (John 18:36). His kingdom is not about politics... It's not about patriotism... It's not about blue or red or purple states. No. It's about identifying with the One who made it clear to everyone that he came for a different purpose. *"For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45).

Jesus. Yeshua. Joshua. "The Lord saves."

Think for a moment about that family member who needs to know and feel their Savior's love and forgiveness... that neighbor who needs encouragement to be in church... that co-worker whose life is empty without Christ. And this week, invite them to come and hear the good news.

"Hosanna!" "Save us now!"

That's what our King, Jesus, rode into Jerusalem to do. That's what he accomplished!

AMEN.