

## Restoration March 24, 2024

**Our Savior is Way Lutheran Church**

**Pastor John Scott**

Happy Palm Sunday. *Hosanna*. Some time ago, I had a small child come up to me after a Palm Sunday service and ask, “Pastor John, who’s Anna?” Straight faced. He actually wanted to know.

I think that is fair. *Hosanna* is not a word that we use in everyday language. We do not tell our children, we do not use that. It is new; it is different. It sets things apart. And today is definitely a different kind of day. Today is the beginning of the Holy Week where we make our way toward Easter. And this is the last week that Jesus spent in Jerusalem on His way to the cross and to rise again from the dead for us. So, we celebrate that the King has come into our midst. Hosanna!

What does Hosanna mean? What is this all about? Hosanna means, “Lord, save us!” What do the people want to be saved from? Put yourself back in that time. Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, and you are part of the crowd. You’ve cut off tree branches, and you’ve even gotten your coats and you’ve thrown your coats into the road so that the procession can go on.

What do the people think that Jesus was going to do when they call out to Him, “Hosanna, Lord, save us.” They thought He was the one who was going to come into Jerusalem to save them from the Romans. It is more of a political thing. “Save us from the people who are oppressing us.” I think they also hoped, specifically many of the people, “Lord, save us from not being able to feed my family tonight.” Things were difficult in Jerusalem. It was not particularly a middle-class haven. It was rather really hard. What Jesus could do when He took bread and fish and fed thousands of people, they wanted done for them as well. For those around who needed healing, they wanted Jesus to save them too because they knew Jesus could bring healing to those who are sick and suffering.

So Jesus comes into the city, into the midst of the people yelling out Hosanna—the very people of the city and of the area—saying something new is happening, and we want you, Jesus, to save us. The next thing according to John that the people said is, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Now, why is this one important? Because it is all about speaking in somebody else’s name. Have you ever spoken up for someone else? I did this once early on in my marriage; we were at church, and I heard from somebody who was starting up a new event at church. And I said, “Well, my wife is really good at that.” I was sure she could do that. So, I signed her up for it. I believe you know what happened next. I spoke in the name of, on behalf of somebody else with authority over someone else when I did not have it.

On the contrary, Jesus comes in the name of the Lord. The people knew this. They knew that all the things He was teaching and saying, the things that He was doing were things of God, that His kingdom that He was bringing was about God’s kingdom, not the kingdom of any particular Roman ruler or Jewish ruler or any other ruler. It was the kingdom of God.

He spoke in the name of the Lord. He talked to people who nobody else would talk to. Because they are loved in the Lord just as we are. You see, they knew something was different. Something was special about Him. Now, the last thing they said, according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is, “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father, David.” What the people realized was that the kingdom that Jesus was bringing was not just for right now. It just was not to feed their bellies today. It was to give them Bread of Life that would bring them into life forever. It was not just about what was happening now. It was about the coming generations, the people who would come after them, people like you and me, of seeing that Jesus was coming to fulfill all of the promises that God had made. And, by riding in on a donkey, in this humble way, He was showing us that He was here to serve, and not to be served.

This made so much more sense the further the week went along, because while they celebrated the king coming in on Sunday, that was not what they were saying on Friday. By the time Friday comes around, Jesus has already had that Last Supper with His disciples. He's already gone out into the Garden to pray. He's been betrayed by the people closest to Him. Even the people who loved Him the most have deserted Him. He's mocked. He's spit upon. He's crucified. These were all things that were necessary to bring you back to the Lord. Jesus went and did all of this just to connect you back to God, and this is the kingdom that He brings, a kingdom of self-emptying, a kingdom of sacrifice so that you can see that the Lord loves you. Every single day, every single moment you can see that the forgiveness of Jesus is yours. Every single day when the people cried out, "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father, David." This experience that we have today is what they were exclaiming that the kingdom of God is here right now.

And then when Jesus will be raised from the dead on Easter, He would do something no one else could do. See, they had seen this once before. John is the only one of the gospel writers to bring this out. And he says, the people that gathered around proclaiming all of these things knew that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead.

Do you remember this story? Have you heard this? Where Jesus's friend, Lazarus, this person that He knew and met had died suddenly and His friends came to Him and told Him Lazarus is dead, and Jesus wept. He wept. And then He went to the tomb and He said, "Lazarus, come out." And Lazarus actually came back from the dead.

There is no Roman ruler that can do that. There is no priest in the temple that could do that. There is none of us that could do that, only Jesus. And when the crowd gathered around and told all of these stories to one another of all the things that Jesus had done among them, they must have thought, "What else will He do?"

Can I spoil the story for you? It happened a long time ago. Jesus actually did rise from the dead. On Easter, the tomb was empty. And what that

means is that life is real for all the people who are proclaiming this on that day and all of us in this sense that Jesus restores all of His creation, not just human beings but all things. He makes all things new when He was raised from the dead. Life in the kingdom of God was made real that day.

We see that today. We know that Jesus has already been risen, but we walk through this week because it is important to see the steps that were taken. It is important, again, to put ourselves within that crowd who proclaimed “Hosanna,” and then just a few days later proclaimed, “Crucify him.” And a few days later, got to see that Christ is risen. So, in all of these ways, we walk through this story so that we can see that we are a part of it, that Jesus has given us new life today and calls us to live in this kingdom that He has given to us, that all those people were proclaiming that day, the kingdom where all things are made new.

I hope that as we end our Lenten journey this week, you’ve been able to see that Christ is for you, that in all that He has done, it has been for you to reconnect you with Himself and not just you, but the people that you see every day, the people that are out in your neighborhood, the people that you see at work, the people that you see at school, the people that you love in your family and in your friends, Jesus loves them as well. And He has come to bring them back to Himself.

Let’s close with a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you for allowing us to celebrate this day, for remembering the time when Jesus came into Jerusalem for that last time, when all the people proclaimed him as the King who has come. Remind us today that he is still that King, that he restores his creation, that he makes all things new, including us.

Lord, every day let us be restored in your grace. And in your presence, let your forgiveness wash over us so that we then can share that with the people around us. So that all will know that Jesus brings them new life.

All this we pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.