

## Sermon for April 1, 2012 – Palm Sunday

Mark 11:1-11

### Theme: Sing Hosanna to our King

- 1) Jesus is exactly that, which the people called him.
- 2) He is much more than we could ever expect.

*As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>3</sup> If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'" <sup>4</sup> They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, <sup>5</sup> some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" <sup>6</sup> They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. <sup>7</sup> When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. <sup>8</sup> Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. <sup>9</sup> Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" <sup>10</sup> "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!"*

Have you ever met someone who was everything you knew he would be but still not what you expected? Maybe it was some sports star or celebrity you got to meet in person. You heard people talk about how this person acted off camera, and when you met him, he acted exactly how people said he would; and yet totally different than you imagined.

The Jews had been waiting for the Messiah to come for almost 1500 years. The LORD had his prophets write very detailed descriptions of what the Messiah would do and how they would recognize him. The Jews studied these prophecies and longed for the Messiah's coming. They even imagine what the Messiah would do for them. They had expectations.

And now, here was Jesus. He was clearly fulfilling all the prophecies concerning the Messiah. He never denied the fact that he was the Messiah, and so the people had high hopes that he was indeed the promised King descended from David who would save them and establish an eternal kingdom. And this is exactly who Jesus was – only, not the way they expected.

Do we have proper, scriptural expectations of Jesus, or do we – like the Jews – allow our imaginations to reinterpret who Jesus is and exactly what kind of salvation and Kingdom He came to establish? My prayer is that our sermon text might lead us all to view Jesus properly, under the theme: **Sing Hosanna to our King.** 1) *Jesus is exactly that, which the people called him.* 2) *He is much more than we could ever expect.*

### Part One: Jesus is exactly that, which the people called him.

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt, the people welcomed him as their Savior and king. Everything Jesus did, he did in fulfillment of Scripture. The crowds knew that the praises they offered were reserved for the Messiah, and the Messiah is what they expected Jesus to be.

They shouted: "*Hosanna!*" This term literally means: "please, save us" or "please, rescue us." and it comes from Psalm 118 verse 25. If you were to look up that verse in our English Bible, you would find this translation: "O LORD, save us." In Hebrew, that phrase sounds like "*Ana ADONAI hosanna!*"

*Hosanna* – save us! The fact that they shouted this tells us that they thought Jesus was indeed the Savior. And this is why they quote further from that Psalm: *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!* Now, understand this verse correctly: In Psalm 118, David is not merely saying: "Happy is the person who greets people with the LORD's name." No, this Psalm is about a King who defeated all his enemies because the LORD was with him. The Holman Christian Standard Bible tries to capture the force of what the people were saying, by translating our text: *He who comes in the name of the Lord is the blessed One!* (Mark 11:9 HCSB) In other words, he is the long prophesied Messiah, the one who is blessed and blesses. He is the LORD's chosen servant who the LORD is with. He will rescue us from our enemies.

And the crowd added this thought: "*Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!*" The crowd certainly recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of the promise the Lord gave King David when He said to him: <sup>12</sup> *When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.* <sup>13</sup> *He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.* <sup>14</sup> *I will be his father, and he will be my son.* (2 Samuel 7:12-14)

And the realization that the long promised King was here, that their hopes and expectation concerning that Messiah were soon to be fulfilled, caused the crowd to cry out: "*Hosanna in the highest!*" (in other words – “may all the angels and host of heaven join our chorus – Lord, save us now as you promised!”)

Yes, the crowds on that first Palm Sunday knew exactly who Jesus was and confessed him as such. But do we? Do we understand and confess Jesus as our Savior, and rejoice in how great and awesome it is that he came to rescue us? Do we recognize the presence of our Savior every time we come forward to receive the Lord’s Supper? Do we recognize his presence as we gather for worship, trusting Jesus promise that *where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.*" (Matthew 18:20) Do we praise Jesus for who He is and recognize him as our Savior - King?

Truth be told, we don't always recognize his presence and praise him for who he is. May this lead us to pray: “Lord, forgive us for the times we fail to see and acknowledge who you are. Help us use your Word so that we may never fail to see you, and rejoice in your coming to save us. We pray this in your name.”

And know this, Dear Christian: the Lord has forgiven us. It was for this purpose that he enter Jerusalem: to win our salvation. May the Holy Spirit lead us rejoice in this fact!

Part Two: He is much more than we could ever expect.

The crowds on Palm Sunday were ecstatic – acknowledging and confessing Jesus as their Messiah king. But 5 short days later, some of these very people who were so proud to be with Jesus abandoned him. Some of the very voices that cried “Hosanna” to him, yelled “crucify Him” and wanted nothing to do with him. Why?

It’s actually quite simple: Jesus was not what they expected. Yes, they wanted salvation, but not the salvation Jesus offered. They wanted political salvation from the Romans! They didn't want a spiritual king but political one who would restore the earthly glory of their golden era. They wanted a Messiah who would make life easy for them, who would provide for their every need so that they would not have to work too hard. They wanted a King who would bring them glory and honor before other people and nations, not one that submitted to the Roman authority and would suffer a shameful death. “What kind of Messiah is this?” they thought to themselves. And so they utterly rejected him.

Notice that their rejection was not based on the evidence of who He is, but rather on their false expectations of what kind of Messiah he should be.

What are our expectations of Jesus? Do we expect him to make our life easier? Do we expect him to bless us financially because we follow him? Do we expect him to close an eye to our pet sins, to forgive us without us having to repent? Do we expect him to let us live life the way we want to live it – pursuing whatever material or earthly dreams we have for ourselves?

What kind of Savior do you need – a Savior from sin or a savior from earthly inconvenience? What kind of King do you want – one who rules in your hearts so that you can live for him, or one that is a slave to your every whim?

Maybe our expectations are not as crass as I described, but all have a selfish, evil nature that imposes these types of expectations on Jesus.

May the realization of our sinful heart lead us to pray: "Lord, forgive us for this! Hosanna, dear Jesus – save me, please. Save me from my selfishness and my sins. Save me from God’s wrath and anger. Save me from myself – my destructive nature that opposes you from being Lord in my heart. Save me, Jesus. Hosanna, dear Lord.”

And save us He did, by marching on into Jerusalem and willingly submitting to all the cruel mockery, injustice and suffering His Father's will for him to undergo. It is through His perfect obedience to His Father that He won righteousness for us. It is through his suffering and death on the cross that He paid for our sins in full. His resurrection proves we are forgiven! Heaven is offered to all and is received by simply believing in him.

And Jesus, our great and glorious Savior King, has sent his Gospel into the world to make believers in every nation. Through the preaching of the Law, the Holy Spirit convicted us of sin, and led us to repentance. Through the proclamation of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit has forgiven our sins and created faith in our hearts. Through faith in the Gospel, Christ rules in our hearts that we avoid sin and live for his glory. In Baptism He purifies us from all sin and marks us as children of God. In the Lord's Supper he gives us the very body and blood he used to win our salvation. He works in all things for our eternal good. He will deliver us from every evil attack and bring us safely home to His kingdom of glory to live with him forever in paradise.

Yes, Jesus most certainly is our Savior and King, and for this reason we cry out to him "Hosanna," Lord save us; recognizing he is exactly who the crowd claimed he was, and that he is much more than we could ever expect. Amen.