

Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020  
"King Jesus" John 12:12-19

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,  
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord, Jesus Christ.

I am sure we all miss that we don't have our Palm Sunday processional today. We miss the children marching in with palms and singing God's praise.

We miss each other. And if you are really loving and caring for your family—you are missing your family. Yes, being separated even from family right now is something we are doing that expresses love. We love each other so much that we are trying to prevent any opportunity for viruses to spread to those we love—especially those with underlying health issues or those who fit in high risk categories. It is loving and caring to keep our distance for now.

And as much as we do love our families, we can drive each other crazy with too much at home time ... so even at home some families might be practicing social distancing there too. God bless those of who live on acres of land – you've got it easier.

But next week ... next week is going to be difficult. Its Easter. No LYF breakfast. No family gatherings—there better not be. Not this year. Express your love for one another still by keeping distant. Please. No exceptions. We love each other and we have just got to stick through with our distancing for now.

And wait. This is a good time for us to get some training in patience—isn't it? God help us to be patient.

Now ... let's look at what God has for us today in His Word.

Ready? This is almost humorous given our situation today that we have NO crowd. How does our text begin? By talking about ... crowds.

**John 12:12–13 (ESV): <sup>12</sup> The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"**

We wish we could be in a crowded church today. The crowd in our text gathered around Jesus and along the way from Bethany to Jerusalem. Waving palms in praise. Looking for salvation—that's what "hosanna" means: "Help" or "Save, I pray." It is a cry for divine deliverance as found in some of the psalms.

This crowd was favorable to Jesus. There was a different crowd later in the week that would call for Jesus' death, but this crowd was looking for the Lord to save them. However, the salvation they were looking for maybe wasn't exactly what they had in mind as the events of this day were unfolding.

Perhaps you have heard before that they were looking for an earthly king who would bring them political and national freedom from their Roman oppressors.

The same way of thinking about Jesus happens today too. We sometimes go looking for an earthly king who will fix our earthly problems. We look for our financial situations to be improved. We want our health and old age to get fixed. We want to work less and have more fun and vacation time. We want vacation time? Well, some of us just might have it now—but it really ain't that much fun if our retirement funds have lost value or if we are temporarily out of a job. And, of course, we want to be saved from viruses.

Now, Jesus did come to save. But what did He come to save the people on earth from?

Did Jesus save them from the Romans? No.

Did Jesus save them from hunger? Once, yes, dramatically with 2 fish and five loaves of bread. But, every day? No.

Did Jesus save some from leprosy? Disease? Physical impairment? Some, yes. Many, yes. But everyone? No. Just ask St. Paul about his thorn in the flesh.

Did Jesus fix anyone's economic situation? No. If anything, some who came into a relationship with Him left their money, their careers, and their goods. Some even left family to serve and follow Him.

Jesus commended that one woman who had only two small copper coins—it was everything she had to live on. She gave them as an offering into the Temple treasury. Jesus commended her, but He did not return them to her or offer her anything as far as we know. She wasn't suddenly living in a mansion.

He did say that there would always be the poor for us to serve and help. Jesus first meant those who were spiritually poor—that is, those who don't know Him in His full sacrifice for sin and resurrection to life.

But it was also economic poverty. To this day the problem of poverty on earth has never been fixed by man nor by God, but many faithful followers of Christ have found opportunity to serve and love their fellow man in many ways.

Serving the poor with God's Word and caring for human needs is how we give witness to others of God's grace.

Did Jesus fix the political systems? No. He did put Himself under their authority, though.

Did Jesus fix the problem of crime? No. But He did teach us how to give and use what we have for those who were victims.

You know ... there is so much in this world that is broken. And it seems as if God has done very little to fix the brokenness. We see it once again in our world-wide pandemic. How can this happen in such an advanced society? How can we still not fix the problem of death? We too cry out, "hosanna"! Lord, save us.

So, what is it that Jesus did come to save us from? Well, He will save us from everything and fix and make things all right. But ... that won't happen until the new heavens and the new earth are brought about on the Last Day. And the only way to get there is to see the real salvation that Jesus does bring.

To help answer that question, let's go back to the time that God first promised to send a Savior. For that, we must go back to the Garden of Eden. It was there that God first promised the Savior. He promised that the Seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. What happened there, in the Garden, that showed that mankind needed a Savior? It was Adam and Eve's disobedience against God's command. And such disobedience is called sin. And it brought death—the curse of everlasting death. This is the problem for which the Savior was promised—to save man from sin and eternal death. And from that evil serpent.

So, in the course of human history God continually reiterated His promise to send that One who would rescue man from sin. Along the way God showed His grace to His people. In order to help the children of man see the salvation that was coming, God showed pictures of sacrifice, illustrations of mercy, and saving events of all kinds.

These saving events were not to show that God would save from every person from every earthly problem. These occasional saving events and miracles were to be pictures, illustrations, and examples of the REALLY BIG saving events that God would perform.

And the first really big saving event was Jesus—THE Son of God—suffering and dying a horrible death on the cross. This sacrificial death was to pay the penalty of our sin. That is what the OT scriptures were leading up to—the suffering servant who would give His life as our ransom from sin and death.

Then, the next really big saving event, tied intimately to Jesus' sacrificial death for us, was Jesus' resurrection! To life! And in His resurrection to life He secured our resurrection to eternal life on the Last Day. And that is when ALL problems will be fixed.

We read in God's Word that some people were healed of diseases—but not everyone who had disease was healed. Some were given very nice earthly blessings, like large tracts of land—but not everyone received such gifts. Some experienced great loss, depth of poverty, and slavery. But then, some were restored to joy, regained wealth, and were freed. The most incredible illustrations, however, were those where a few who died were actually raised again to life! These were small illustrations and mini-pictures of the great things God would do in Christ.

God also showed examples of the suffering and sacrifice that the Savior would endure. A number of the prophets suffered greatly at the hands of people. They were ridiculed, suffered poverty, nakedness, embarrassment, and even death. Certainly, we should see how these were illustrations of Christ Jesus for whom the descriptions of ridicule, poverty, nakedness, embarrassment and death fit perfectly.

And so today, these same things are repeated as God wills. It happens among us as individuals or as the community of the body of Christ. Jesus said we would suffer like Him for His name's sake. We should not expect miraculous healing on earth, but through faith in Christ look forward to the great and full healing He will work in eternity. All our problems of health and frustration and difficulty and fatigue and sickness and fear—the answer is Jesus. He has forgiven us our sins and He will give to us an incredible home in heaven. THAT is where all things will be made well.

That is why we do not fear death here on earth. We know that because of sin we deserve death. And we will die the first death—earthly death. But we don't run to it foolishly. That is why we are taking the precautions of social distancing right now—to preserve life.

But if some among us should contract a virus, or suffer a stroke, or have our body destroyed by cancer, and these things bring us death, we know that we have eternal life to look forward to. We will be raised on the Last Day by the true King—the King who gave His life for us to pay for our sin against God. We know with the certainty of faith that Christ purchased heaven for us with His own suffering and death. And as He was raised to life, so will we be raised to life—eternal and glorious in the realm of the Lord Jesus Christ who answers our cry for mercy.

God has had mercy on us. Our sins are forgiven in Christ. And He will be with us through all trial, temptation, sickness and disease. For Christ is King and there is no other.

Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

We look for His eternal coming when He will make all things right and restore His creation broken by sin. We wait and we watch for our King to return. And then, in the new heavens and new earth, we will see His glorious reign and all will be well.

To God alone be all the glory. Amen.

Now the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen. ≈ 1850

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