

Sermon – Matthew 21.1-11 (Palm Sunday – 2024)
Receiving Jesus Like a Child

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, You have caused Your beloved Son to take our nature upon Himself, that He might give us the example of humility and suffer death upon the cross for our sins: Mercifully grant us a believing knowledge of this, that we may follow the example of His patience, and be made partakers of the benefits of His sacred Passion and death; through the same, Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

² saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose *them* and bring *them* to Me.

³ "And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

⁴ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

⁵ "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

⁶ So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them.

⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set *Him* on them.

⁸ And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road.

⁹ Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!"

¹⁰ And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"

¹¹ So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

These are Your Words heavenly Father. Sanctify us by the truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear fellow redeemed,

Children are often associated with this special service of the Church Year. Now, children are mentioned no where in any of Scripture's Palm Sunday accounts. Yet, in Matthew's gospel, after Jesus had entered Jerusalem, we find the blind and lame coming to Jesus for healing, and Matthew records that the children were crying out "**Hosanna to the Son of David!**"—the very same words that were sung by the crowd in Jesus' procession into Jerusalem. They must have continued to sing the song of the crowd, which goes to show the importance of teaching children the psalms and hymns of the church, and that these are regular songs for our daily lives.

But, to further make the point about how children are associated with Palm Sunday, isn't it natural to have the Sunday School sing on this particular Sunday. And also consider the main hymns we sing today:

"Hosanna, loud hosanna, the little children sang."

"The Lord of men and angels Rode on in lowly state
Nor scored that little children Should on His bidding wait."

"All glory, laud, and honor To Thee, Redeemer, King
To whom the lips of children Made sweet hosannas ring."

So, why this close association? I'm not sure the historical reason for this, but I do think it is fitting. Here is the King, going to war for His kingdom, giving up His life for the life of His people. Who are those that belong to the kingdom? Jesus said it, "**Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.**" (Mt 18:3).

Christ's kingdom consists of those who have become like little children. Children are an example of humility for us all. "**Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven**", Jesus says. (Mt 18:4).

A little child is totally dependent on his parents. A little child must rely on others for a home, for food, for safety, or even to get from one place to another. We must become like little children.

We are totally dependent on our God for our salvation. A person must rely on Christ to deliver him from sin, to save him from Satan, and to bring him from the death of unbelief to the life of faith in Christ. No one can enter the kingdom of heaven on his own two feet. He must become like a little child, and recognize that God must do it all. The sinner is totally dependent upon God to do these things for him.

Pride keeps us out of the kingdom. See how pride is in such great contrast to the humility of Christ who is lowly riding on a donkey into Jerusalem, The Lamb goes uncomplaining forth—forward to the cross as a humble servant going to win salvation for the world that lives in rebellion to Him.

Jesus is true God, majestic, almighty, and eternal God, but see how He humbles Himself. Shall we turn our nose up at Him in pride?

Pride would keep us from crying out, "**Hosanna to the Son of David!**" since this is a prayer for help and salvation. It is a prayer for forgiveness. It is an admission of our problem of sin, and our total inability to save ourselves, or even to contribute just a little bit to our salvation. Rather in pride, we want to take some credit. We want to think that we are not in such dire straits to need God's forgiveness so desperately. Pride keeps us from thinking that God's forgiveness is the most precious and important thing in our lives.

Pride keeps us from the worship of our king. Instead of laying our cloaks down before our Lord, and putting palm branches before Him, we prefer to give ourselves the royal treatment, and serve ourselves first. In pride we seek to serve ourselves first, our loved ones second, and maybe we'll sacrifice a little bit for our Lord.

Pride leads us to think that we are above the spiritual things of God: Too cool for Christ; too smart to believe the "fairy tales;" "too rich to need the treasures of His salvation; too strong to need to gather with believers and hear the preaching of the gospel; too grown up to continue to study God's Word.

Pride would keep us from moving our communities like the multitude in our text caused a great commotion in Jerusalem. Pride makes us more concerned about our status in the eyes of the world rather than boldly confessing the joyful truth that Christ has saved us and brought us into His kingdom.

We don't like to be humbled. But blessed are the humbled, blessed are the poor in spirit. Isn't that why we're here, or at least shouldn't this be the reason why we are here? So whether we entered the doors today as little children or not, we now confess our sins, we confess our pride before the Lord, knowing that our pride keeps us out of the kingdom. And with childlike faith, we look to the King, our Lord Jesus, because He is our only hope. He is the only source of our forgiveness. He is the only way by which we are brought into His eternal kingdom.

And this faith is not disappointed. Why? Because He went through with the sacrifice. He didn't think Himself above saving such filthy sinners as you and me. But He took our filth. He took our sins. To the cross He went with them, that we may be free from them forever. He took care of all that we could not do. He won for you and me forgiveness. He has delivered us from sin and saved us from Satan. By His Spirit, He has brought to you from the death of unbelief to the life of faith, so that as a child, you receive from Jesus life in His kingdom and every heavenly blessing!

It is good to see that we are little children, to see that God in His abundant grace does everything for our salvation. And thus we can also have a childlike joy that the one before whom we bow the knee is our God, and our Savior.

So, may our confession and our lives always be one of a humble reliance upon Christ's salvation, and of praise for His grace which brought us into His kingdom. **"Hosanna to the Son of David!"** Amen.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Forevermore. Amen.