

The Children Sing Hosanna
Matthew 21:6-17, Palm Sunday
March 16, 2008

Beloved of the Lord.....Palm Sunday marks the glorious entrance of Jesus our King, into Jerusalem but a few days before His crucifixion, death, and glorious resurrection. On Palm Sunday Jesus, the King of all Creation, rode into Jerusalem in a humble way, upon a colt, a young donkey. When He came the Bible says the whole city was moved to meet Him. "A very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way." They laid their garments and palm branches in the path of Jesus. They also waved their palm branches in the air, cheering Him on, joyful to see Him.

The palm branch or palm tree in the Bible represents the fruitful Christian life through Christ, and also our victory over our enemies. Psalm 92 says, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree", that is God's children will be green and fruitful in this world by faith in Christ Jesus. Palm branches likewise signify our victory. Christ through the cross conquered the power and bondage of our own sin. He was victorious over the devil and death itself, so the believer immediately enters paradise upon death. As the children waved their palm branches with joy as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, so the saints in heaven wave their palm branches in victory before the Lamb of God. In Revelation 7, John writes of heaven, "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." That sounds to me just like Palm Sunday when Christ rode into Jerusalem! Parents and children alike, the saints were singing His praises!

I. Jesus receives the praises of children. As for the children who sang Jesus' praises on Palm Sunday, we should first remember the sacrament of circumcision. God had commanded the Jewish boys to be circumcised the eighth day after birth. Circumcision was an outward sign, that God's grace and forgiveness were upon the child, "a seal of the righteousness of the faith." As for the O.T. girls who could not receive this sacrament, we can be assured that God through the Word sanctified them as well. This is proven in Mark 10 when mothers brought their children to Jesus, seeking His blessing. These boys and girls were already believers before they came to Jesus, for Jesus said to the disciples, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." They were already in God's kingdom, the kingdom of faith, and this was

because the boys were circumcised, and the girls likewise sanctified by the Word.

When it comes to the salvation of little children, there are many questions. Christians often wonder what happens to their miscarried child, or perhaps a child that died before they had the chance to baptize them. Here we rely on the grace and mercy of God and remember that Jesus died on the cross for absolutely every single soul, even those who die in the womb. We should remember that David himself had a newborn son who died before he could be circumcised. Though greatly grieved, David trusted he would see that child one day in heaven. We ought to trust in God's mercy as David did. On the other hand, we should take care not to go further than the Scriptures do. We don't have all the answers. There are the unsearchable judgments of God. For example, we don't know what happens to the souls of these embryos, where life is created by evil scientists for stem-cell research. These are abominable works committed by scientists who are trying to play God. Except they repent, they will one day be punished for their crimes. But we don't really know what happens to these little souls. All of this is in God's hands.

We must also speak about children of unbelieving parents who fail to have their own children baptized. What a tragedy this is! For Christ died for the sins of all, and Christ has earned forgiveness also for the child of unbelieving parents: yet when a parent refuses to baptize their child, they are keeping God's grace from the child! Since all children are born in sin, all children are in need of baptism. Without baptism they perish in damnation. If we begin to teach that unbaptized children go to heaven and not hell, not only will we end up denying original sin, but we will end up despising God's grace and salvation as unnecessary. To deny and despise baptism as a Means of Grace, is to deny and despise Christ and His forgiveness.

Thanks be to God, that God in His mercy has given us the precious gift of Holy Baptism! "According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost!" By this wonderful Sacrament, we have the assurance that God's grace and mercy, His abundant love is upon our child, and we even know that God has created faith therein! Those little children who waved their palm fronds before Jesus sang "Hosanna to the Son of David" because the faith of Jesus was in their heart! These children knew Jesus had come to save them from their sins, for Hosanna means "Lord save us!" With the children still singing His praises, "Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers." With a holy wrath, He cleansed His temple of these greedy merchants! God's house is not to be a place of business where things are bought and sold, nor is it to be an entertainment center.

The only business of a church, so to speak, is the salvation of souls. We preach Christ crucified, and the full truth of His Word. If people ask you why you go to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, simply tell them, "That is where I hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ! That is where God forgives me of my sins through the Means of Grace. That is where the truth of God's Word is still the rule and not the exception. That is where I praise God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for redeeming me from my sins!"

And here let us understand, God welcomes and hears our songs, whether we sing on key, or off key. It matters not to God if we cannot follow a tune, or if we are tone deaf, like a pastor I once knew who now sings perfectly in heaven. The point is, God receives and accepts our praises, if only we sing in the faith of Jesus Christ our Savior! This is true especially of children and infants. For when the chief priests and scribes saw the little children singing to Jesus, they were upset! "Don't you hear what their saying of you Jesus? These children are singing that you are the Messiah!" And what did Jesus say? "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Jesus said, "YES I hear them! And YES I accept their praises for they are right! For the Bible says that God's praises are best sung from the mouths of infants and children!" And it is true, baptized infants sing the praises of Jesus in their heart by faith. In the soul of a baptized baby that is but a few days old, there is joy and happiness in the knowledge of his salvation! Just think of it, throughout the world on this glorious Palm Sunday, baptized children and infants even now sing in perfect harmony by faith, the praises of the Lord Jesus who saved them from their sin. In heaven above, God hears and accepts the songs of these little children, for it is the song the Holy Ghost has created in their heart before they could even speak! It is the song of faith, the song of love for the Lord Jesus. Every believer, from the newborn infant to the most elder of the elderly, knows this song of faith. It is our song of love! Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest! We love Him because He first loved us!

II. Parents are to raise their children with the Word of God. His love for us was proven when He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. His love for us was proven when He allowed Himself to be betrayed with a kiss, captured in the Garden of Gethsemane, tried before Caiaphas, Annas, Herod and Pilate, and then declared guilty by all! His love for us was proven when He was nailed to the tree saying, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!" His love for us was proven when He said to the dying thief "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise!" His love for us was proven when He took all our sins upon Himself, and suffered God's wrath for them until each and every last sin was paid for, so that

He could say, "It is finished!" His love for us was proven when He yielded His soul into death, so that conquer death and rise from death on the third day! "Because I live, ye shall live also" He said. His love for us was proven when the Jesus said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Dear sinner, I don't care who you are or what you've done, the King of all Creation, the Lord Jesus has paid for all sins upon the cross. His mercy toward you is higher than the heaven is above the earth. Faith alone in Him is necessary. Turn away from your sins and cling to Him in faith. Cast off your works of darkness, for He is the light of life. Your salvation has been made secure "by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." There is perfect forgiveness in the blood of God's only-begotten Son. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." As God keeps and preserves you in the one true faith by the hearing of the Word, see to it that your children likewise hear God's Word. For children are not only to be baptized with God's Word, they are also to be fed God's Word. Do not only feed and clothe their bodies, but feed and clothe their souls with the Gospel Word, the righteousness of Christ. For then one day will stand before God's heavenly throne and wave their palm branches before Him with all joy.

Beloved of the Lord, we all know there is no such thing as a perfect parent who has perfectly raised his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Our own parents weren't perfect, neither will we be. But our sins in parenthood are no different from any other sin. By faith In Christ Jesus, imperfect parents are made perfect saints. The devil himself cannot charge us with sin, when the righteousness of Christ is upon us by faith. Therefore as we try to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, let us not be discouraged. Christ is our strength, and Christ our righteousness! And even if we have lost a child to our Evil Foe, let us remember that Christ the Good Shepherd goes after those lost sheep, and He often saves them. In Jesus there is no reason to despair, but every reason to rejoice. May God therefore guide us in our parenthood, and keep our children safely in His grace. Amen.

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