

Hosanna to the Son of David!

Psalm 118:22-26,
Palm Sunday March 29, 2015

Sermon Text: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.” Psalm 118:22-26 (KJV)

Beloved of the Lord.....On Palm Sunday the children and the multitudes were singing special words, a special song, namely Hosanna! which means, “Save, we beseech Thee!” “This exclamation was taken from Psalm 118:25, which was recited as a part of the great Hallel (praise) at the Feast of Tabernacles and at the Passover and therefore was familiar to the Jews” (Rueprecht, Bible History References, pg. 295.)

Singing this of Christ this basically means, “God save the King and give us salvation through Him!” Also, when they cried out to Jesus “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord”, these were the words that used to be sung by the Levitical choir when people came into church. They would hear a blessing from God, a welcome, a praise; not praise of man, but of God.

In like manner on a Communion Sunday in our hymnbook, we sing the Sanctus, just before Holy Communion, page 26. Here we sing, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory; Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He, Blessed is He, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” We keep and retain these words today because Christ is our exalted Lord and Savior, the Son of David and also the Son of God. Since He is higher than the heaven of heavens, yet He stooped down so low to save us miserable sinners, by the offering of His body and blood, He and His Word is worthy of all our focus and attention today as we listen to the sermon. “Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD.” Our first question now is...

1. How is the right hand of the Lord exalted?

Our Psalm today states that “the right hand of the Lord is exalted” and “the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.” What does all this mean? It means God has Almighty power over all things. The “right hand of God” means He rules over all visible and invisible creatures, good angels, evil angels, the plant and animal world, secular government, and all mankind. And just as the right hand or arm of a man is usually stronger than the left, so when God speaks of His right hand or arm, He is threatening the wicked with judgment, but comforting His children so we need not be afraid of the devils, world, or secular government. God also has power over all true Christians as well, but He does not use this power against us, but only for us. This is what we pray in the Lord's Prayer, “for Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory, forever and ever, Amen.” This is also why our catechism says that “As my King, Christ with His almighty power rules over all creatures, governs and protects His Church, and finally leads is to glory.”

Connecting the right hand of the Lord, or His Almighty power and strength, to Palm Sunday, and the triumphant ride of Christ our King into Jerusalem, we should see God's Almighty power and strength on our side. He is riding into Jerusalem with great purpose, a divine and holy purpose, to use His Almighty power as the Son of God in order to battle against the devil, our sins, and death itself. The Prince of Life will soon suffer and die in our stead. He is the life of all life itself, the Author, Fountain and source of all the living, but now as a King and Champion, He rides into battle, facing powerful enemies which we cannot imagine. When you thus think of the "right hand of God", think of Christ your King, and then meditate upon what it really means, that God comes down from heaven to become one of you, a True Man. Even now, as then, He stands by your side in all your battles against your sins, the devil and death. He rides into Jerusalem upon a donkey, but He leaves carrying your cross, namely your sins. His suffering is so intense He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death." Finally He dies so death itself would be conquered, and so it is conquered when He rises again the third day.

Thus before the cross Jesus is in a State of Humiliation. Though He is True God, equal with the Father, He does not fully use His power nor reveal His full glory on earth. He holds it all back and "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." Nobody could see with their eyes, Jesus as a King riding into Jerusalem, but only the eyes of faith could see. Consider then that Jesus chose this path, a lowly path, a lowly donkey, palm branches instead of the red carpet. He accepted the praises of little children rather than city officials. He comes not to be a lord over men, but a servant of all. "The Son of man came not to be [served], but to [serve], and to give his life a ransom for many." His disciples didn't wash His holy feet, but He washed their dirty feet. Now upon the cross with His blood He would wash away the sins of the whole world. Jesus comes not to condemn us for our sins, but our King comes to take away our cross and bear it Himself alone, ALL ALONE, stricken, smitten, and afflicted because our sins were there. So In John 8 Jesus said, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." In John 12 Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." In John 3 Jesus said, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And that's why our catechism says, "As my King, Christ with His almighty power rules over all creatures, governs and protects His Church, and finally leads us to glory."

Truly in this world the ONLY WAY to exalt Christ is by faith. By faith alone we can lift Him up above all others. Were it not for Jesus, there would only be blackness and darkness after death, a cold grave and a rapid descent into eternal hell, eternal damnation, eternal death, which is the second death. We would pine away for all eternity in torment, justly for the shameful sins of our carnal bodies, the perverse and unclean thoughts of our minds, or the dirty deeds of our hands. O how it is not possible for flesh and blood on earth to begin to imagine the torments of hell! But Jesus didn't imagine it, Jesus endured it and felt it personally. He felt God's full immeasurable and infinite wrath because our

sins were there in His own body. God truly forsook Jesus upon the cross, without one drop of love for Him. Hell is not only a lake of fire, but it is to be eternally forsaken by God. When you thus think of the grace of God, you must think of Jesus and His willingness to suffer all this for you. Indeed with all His heart, He did not want you to be cast away into hell, so instead Jesus was cast away for you. The impossible price you could never pay for your sins, Jesus paid. You are therefore pardoned, forgiven, and set free. The devil cannot have you. Death has no hold. The entire record of your sins has been blotted out as if they were never committed. In place of hell, Jesus promises you paradise, heaven, life everlasting with Him that no man can take away. If you want forgiveness all you must do is believe in Him, for Jesus has done all. "Now ye are clean through the Word I have spoken unto you." John 15:3 (KJV)

This is why "the right hand of the Lord is exalted." This is also why death could not hold nor keep Life in the grave. Jesus, the Life of all the Living, rose on the third day. The price was paid, the victory won, because "the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." Therefore "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." Whatever our afflictions, God preserves our life for eternal life. Therefore "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." When you see Christ by faith, there is no death before you, no eternal death, but only eternal life. Death passes over us, yet we pass through death unto life everlasting. Therefore.....

II. "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord!" Now in truth, the gates here spoken of by the Psalmist, were the gates or doors to the Temple in the Old Testament during David's reign. Believers were happy to go there, for therein was the promise of righteousness by the Messiah, our Christ. In like manner the doors to our church could be called gates of righteousness, for here in this congregation God has given us the Means of Grace, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and also Gospel preaching. Through these Means of Grace the gates to heaven are likewise open to us, for Christ has opened them by His own blood. As Jerusalem received Christ on Palm Sunday, so the New Jerusalem above will receive us for Christ's sake.

This is also why little children praised Jesus on that first Palm Sunday, because God's Spirit had given them the gift of faith. As mentioned earlier, they sang "Hosanna to the Son of David" because they knew Jesus by faith, and Jesus blessed and praised them for their faith. We know this because after Jesus entered Jerusalem He went straight to the temple and again threw out the moneychangers. Then "the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" So today when Baptists tell us we shouldn't baptize infants because they cannot believe, we simply answer, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Our infants and children believe in Jesus today because of the Means of Grace, Holy Baptism, which is a stairway to heaven for our little children. The grace of God, His forgiveness and love come down from heaven by the Word connected to the water, and that child is delivered

from the devil, given the Spirit, and life everlasting, as long as they believe in their Baptism and do not deny it. Hence....

III. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. Jesus foretold this rejection by the Jews many times. Not long after He entered Jerusalem, Jesus told this parable to the Jews who fought against Him and later cried out “Crucify Him, crucify Him.” To the same Jews Jesus spoke to them of a certain householder who planted a vineyard and then went away to a far country, leaving others to care for it. In due time the householder sent his servants to collect the revenue from the fruits, but “the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.” “But last of all [the householder] sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.” But they murdered even the son. Here Jesus asks the Jews a question “When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?” Here they answered, “He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.” Therefore by their own mouth they spoke of their own judgment and death. God’s judgment upon Jerusalem for slaying the Son of God happened in 70AD. The Romans leveled the city because God has all power over secular government. So it was the place and honor of the Jews was forever lost, because they failed to see the glory God had put in their midst, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of David, Hosanna in the Highest!..... Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Therefore “This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.”

It is marvelous to us because we too are unworthy of God’s salvation, just as the Jews, yet we see it, we know it, we believe Jesus is our Savior with our heart by faith, because the Holy Spirit has opened our eyes. We are the lame, the blind, the dumb, the dead, Christ has healed. Therefore let us not be high-minded as the Jews who rejected Christ, but let us in all humility and praise bow before Him who is higher than the heavens. By His very body and blood, Jesus has given us the stairway to heaven, and by Baptism Jesus has received our children. So let us sing “Hosanna to the Son of David” and “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”. Amen.