

The rumblings around town were that someone was making his way into Jerusalem. A big crowd started to form. Big crowds always attract big crowds. It's about being where the action is, where there's excitement. So people gather. That Sunday that's exactly what was happening. People were heading out the city gate to line the streets. They waited in anticipation of someone. Maybe they heard a little bit about him, maybe not. Maybe they were just there because everyone else was there too.

Someone standing near a palm tree cut down a palm branch. Suddenly more people had that same idea. When others couldn't get palm branches fast enough they took off their own cloaks and outer garments. Holding these they waited and watched for the first glimpse coming over the horizon. Faintly they could make out the sound too. What sounded like cheering, shouting, and singing was at first quiet, growing louder. The crowds swelled with the movement of the individual everyone was scrambling to see. The procession moved along as this special someone came into Jerusalem.

Then the crowd arrived. At the center of the giant group of people clearly visible on the back of a donkey was the one. Palm branches went down in front of him. Cloaks too. And the cheering. Someone shouted, **"Hosanna to the Son of David!"** Others joined in and the whole crowd shouted, **"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"** Who were they shouting for? Who could stir this kind of crowd and cause this kind of enthusiasm, even though he was riding a beast of burden? The city asked and the crowd responded, **"This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."** What they may not have known was that he was more. If he was the Son of David, then he was God's own Son and the promised Messiah. Shouts of praise for the wonderful things he had done were very appropriate. After that kind of parade atmosphere everyone must have left feeling light headed and excited.

By the next day Jesus was back in Jerusalem. Having spent the night outside the city, Jesus went straight to the temple. No cheers went up as Jesus got to work. No shouts, but there were crowds. It was the time of year when ever adult male had to come to Jerusalem to offer the yearly sacrifice to God. So the temple courts were swarming with people. Buying and selling took place in the court of the Gentiles. This large space consisting of maybe a couple of football fields surrounded a flat pavement which surrounded the immediate temple building. The court of the Gentiles was designated for people outside Judaism who wanted to be close to God. God welcomed them too and this was their place in his house. In this location the religious leaders allowed sellers to come in and set up shop. Animals for the sacrifices, money changers to allow for the exchange of foreign currency to pay the temple tax, and all the pilgrims who came for the festival made this area a noisy smelly place. No Gentile could find a quiet corner to pray. Jesus changed all that.

As Jesus started tipping over tables and driving out the sellers from their booths he said, **"My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers."** God's house was to be a sacred space, a dignified space for God's people to worship their God. All the buying and selling was an unnecessary distraction that needed a new location. It was far different from the day before. Palm Sunday saw Jesus riding a donkey in humility showing he was the Messiah. Driving these merchants out showed Jesus as the Messiah too. He was zealous for God's house and for God's people. The merchants were comfortable, using the opportunity presented to make extra money. Besides, they figured worship was still happening, pushed off into a corner. People could still be in God's house, and that was the most important part to them.

As soon as the courtyard was clear the blind and the lame came to him. As soon as the merchants were gone children could get close to him. And when they did wonderful things happened. Astonishingly the blind and lame were healed. Astonishingly the children picked up on the shouting of the day before. **"Hosanna to the Son of David!"** That was a title reserved for the Messiah. On Palm Sunday the crowds recognized Jesus as that Messiah, the Savior from God. On Monday the children also called out to Jesus as the Messiah. They saw wonderful things. A Savior who cared about everyone. Wanted worship to be about the relationship with God, peace, and a place for them to gather. A Savior who saw to their physical needs and brought healing in miraculous ways.

The religious leaders didn't like it at all. **"Do you hear what these children are saying?"** Did they seriously think Jesus should stop these children? The children were right. The religious leaders were too comfortable in their positions of authority and with the money they were making in the temple. Jesus disrupted that comfort with affliction. Are we getting a little too comfortable in our place of worship? Do we look at this house of God as a place to escape the burden of our sins with some good feelings but really lack of repentance? Our attitude might be to use church as a refuge for our guilt but not a place to confront guilt. We get comfortable talking to someone about the weather or sports but not about the sin we know they're committing. If we think we're safe from God's wrath because we're in church, we're wrong. If we think because worship is happening, people are getting marked off as attending, that everything is okay just by people being here, we're wrong.

What are the wonderful things Jesus did? Look no further than the parade into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. You were involved in that. Because that man sitting on the back of a donkey had one purpose in mind. Get into Jerusalem. Start this week of passion and suffering. Bear the burden of sin while sitting on a donkey. The shouts of Hosanna were for the king. Your king. Jesus getting the victory parade before the victory. Telling isn't it? Jesus carries on Palm Sunday the load of sins for the whole world. A load of sins you couldn't carry. He is soon to be afflicted with grief and separation from God because of your sins. You enjoy comfort. Do you hear what the children are saying? They shout **"Hosanna to the Son of David"** for the wonderful things Jesus did, all of which were for you too.

Another king foresaw this event happening. It was under inspiration of the Holy Spirit that King David about 1000 years before it happened wrote about Palm Sunday and the events surrounding that day. In Psalm 8, David expresses adoration of God because God asserts his will. **“You have set your glory above the heavens.”** Adores God because he executes his purposes. **“You made [man] ruler over the works of your hands.”** David can adore God because he silences his enemies. And all of this brings out praise. Praise that God causes to come from children. The children sing. The children praise because of God’s actions. When the children started shouting to Jesus, the prophecy was fulfilled. Jesus was certain God would lead him to victory because God brought about praise from the children.

Children are better seen and not heard. People of Jesus’ day thought the same thing, actually few wanted to even see them. Now the children were joining in the praise. The religious leaders were furious. **“Do you hear what these children are saying?”** It was bad enough the adults lined the parade route the day before. Now the children were joining in. They didn’t question anything they saw. They just believed and praised. Maybe they didn’t fully understand why. But that’s what drove the religious leaders crazy. Questions were necessary. Adults must doubt and come to conclusions based on facts. Didn’t anyone realize Jesus could not be the Messiah? These children shouldn’t be shouting praise to him, the religious leaders thought.

Was our praise muted this morning because of anything? Reasons for doubt because of uncertainty in life. Questions that arise about a man some 2000 years ago making claims but we have no real solid proof we can hold in our hands. And all around us are people making us feel skeptical. They don’t go to church, why should we? They don’t seem to believe in God and their lives go just fine. They don’t make offerings, they don’t give up time to worship, they don’t try and control they’re behavior. We do all those things and bad things still happen to us.

On that Monday the children believed that Jesus was the Messiah. They trusted it without question and shouted praise to him because of it. Trust was built on Christ Jesus. That trust came from what children and adults saw the day before. A man riding into Jerusalem, fulfilling the prophecy about a Messiah riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. But that man was not just a man. He was also God. And that’s the gospel. That’s where your faith is built. God’s not asking for blind faith. Listen to the children shout. Follow the evidence Jesus lays down. See him healing. See the crowds. Put the pieces together for yourself and the Holy Spirit confirms for you what nothing else can. By faith you can join the song of praise to Jesus because by faith you know he’s the Savior. The gospel message gives you faith. Then with eyes of faith on Jesus you sing his praise.

We walked into church this morning singing Hosanna loud Hosanna. Were you belting out praise to God as loud as you could? You had every reason to. Jesus, who you know well from his Word and from the sacraments, leads you to trust. Trust in God leads you to praise God. Praise him for the help he’s given and when you have asked him for help. Praise him as you lift up your voices in song to the Savior. He loved you, changed you, forgives you. Praise God because you’re his. He’s the source of your praise and he brings about praise from children, adults, you, me. **“Do you hear what these children are saying?”** Of course you do. Because of Jesus’ wonderful acts to save you, you can join them in their song of praise.