

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. You'll see that in our Psalm, reading in our intro, Psalm 24, as well as the refrain is Psalm 118. This is a Psalm of the tabernacle, a Psalm of the time of festival where they call upon the name of the Lord. Hosanna. What does Hosanna mean? It means help us or save us.

So the people were crying out to Jesus to save them and to help them. And while I know that several days later from now, they're going to cry out, "Crucify him. Crucify him." But this group right here, the group of people that are watching him enter into Jerusalem are looking forward to something. They're looking forward to an act of God. They're looking forward to God to save them and not just from the Romans, though there are probably some that believe that. Israel particularly knew that their Lord and Savior was meant to save them, not necessarily from oppression from any government per se, but to save them from the one thing that oppresses all of us and that is sin.

At least anybody who read or had ears to hear as the Isaiah passage talks about, and of course this is talking about Christ, but it's the same for us. That morning by morning, he awakens and he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. The most important thing we can know about God is what he tells us, what he speaks to us. And so going back to his word and recognizing what his word is saying and what it is doing, that is what saves us. That is the hope that they had in the Old Testament, and that is the hope that they have in the New Testament, and that is the hope that we have today.

Signs and wonders are great, but they're not sufficient for salvation. Signs and wonders cause you to turn your head and pay attention for a moment. But the sign and the wonder disappears. And if that's all you're relying upon is the sign and wonder, then your faith or your reliance disappears as well. God does not give us a continual parade of miraculous signs and wonders. Well, outside the normal signs and wonders of the day dawning and life being here and us breathing and all the regular everyday signs and wonders that we just take for granted. Those are still there. But those can tell us there is a God. The only thing that can tell us there is a merciful God who forgives our sins. The only way we know that is through the word.

And so Jesus is the one who hears from his Father and communicates directly to the people, the words of his Father. As he's saying, as he's talking to his disciples, "What should I say? Lord, God, take me from this. Don't let me do this." He says, "No. This is a time for God to be glorified because God's word is the thing that is being fulfilled."

Isaiah talks about it, the word being fulfilled. We hear it. I gave my back to those who strike and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard. That's exactly what happened to Jesus in preparation for his crucifixion. There's a reason this whole section of Isaiah is called the suffering servant, because this section in particular speaks to us about Christ. It talks about by his stripes we are healed. The iniquity of us all is placed upon him. These are all things that we get from Isaiah, from this section of Isaiah. There's a reason Isaiah is called the fifth gospel. We got Matthew Mark, Luke, and John and Isaiah.

Admittedly, Isaiah was written 700 years before the gospels, but God gave Isaiah a vision and communicated Isaiah for the words to write down of what the Messiah was going to do. And people who were paying attention, people who were reading the word and believed in the word would know that something was going on, because why does Jesus choose this day to enter into Jerusalem? This day to prepare for his crucifixion and resurrection. Why not any other day?

Now, admittedly this comes directly off the events of him raising Lazarus from the dead. And so there's a sign of miraculous nature of power over life and death. And of course, he tells his disciples, "Let us go to Jerusalem." And Thomas goes, "Let us join him and die with him." They're headed, his face like flint towards his duty and his joy and his purpose. But why today?

Today in the Jewish calendar is the 10th of Nisan, or at least when Jesus was entering into Jerusalem. The 10th of Nisan. And what's significant about that day? Why do I know it's the 10th of Nisan? Because that is the day that God told the people to select the lamb for sacrifice for the first Passover. They were to select the sacrifice and check it to make sure there were no blemishes and there was nothing wrong with the lamb so that on the Passover night, they could kill the lamb and eat the lamb as a sacrifice and preparation so that the blood of the lamb would be on the doorpost and the lintel so that the angel of death would pass over the Israelites. This is the day that the lamb was chosen or lambs, a lamb was chosen.

And Jesus enters into Jerusalem and the people select him. He is the chosen lamb. There were plenty of lambs from Passover, the first Passover, all the way for the so many thousands of years until Jesus gets up, plenty of lambs being sacrificed. But this is now the lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the world, not just to cover the world, not just to cause God to passover and not pay attention, but to get rid of our sin, the lamb of God.

And he is entering on a donkey, which if you've ever seen a donkey or tried to ride one, is not exactly a graceful activity. You look awkward, your feet are dangling down. It's not like majestic stallion of war or something like that. You look a little ridiculous. And it's a little bit humbling, quite frankly. And that was kind of the point.

You see, Jesus is not just the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, he's also the son of David, the king of Israel. And that is significant as well because when David entered into Jerusalem and when his son Solomon entered into Jerusalem, they also entered on a beast of burden. This was a mule, but they entered into it. And it was a sign, it became a sign of kingship that the king would ride into Jerusalem on a beast of burden signifying that he was not the ultimate king of Israel, but the God was the king and he was his servant. But now the king who is both God and servant, God and man is now coming in riding on a donkey because Zechariah prophesies that the Messiah will come in riding on a donkey. The son of David will come in riding on a donkey.

Now David and Solomon were on a mule because theirs was not the full fulfillment. It was a beast of burden and yes, but was not the fullness of the prophecy. That was to be fulfilled, not by a son of David, Solomon, but by the son of David, Jesus Christ. And so the son of David, who is the lamb of God, who is also the son of God, is coming to do what no one else can do, to be selected for the slaughter.

And so the lambs are sacrificed on the fourth day on Thursday. Jesus celebrates a Passover and then himself is crucified on Friday, thus fulfilling all that was going on before him in the Passover and bringing us a new feast or a continuation of the Old Testament feast, but giving it more definition and a clearer purpose. So now we don't celebrate with lambs and bitter herbs and unleavened bread... Well, unleavened bread? But unleavened bread and wine with the word which we hear and the word connected with the bread and the wine become bring on the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

So we don't just get a little bit of wine and a little bit of bread. We get the body and blood with the bread and the wine and not just for the covering of our doorpost with his blood, but the covering of our lives with his blood so that we might be forgiven all of our sins so that the iniquities of us all are placed upon him. That is what he is doing on this day. He is taking on the mantle of the lamb of God and fulfilling the purpose of that title to be sacrificed for the glory of God and for our benefit that we might be forgiven of all of our sins because that's what he promised. That's what his word said.

As the Philippians passage says, "He took on the form of the servant, he became found in human form. He humbled himself to become obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, that he might be lifted up so that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

Everyone. We do it with joy and thanksgiving, and we pray that all others might see the fulfillment of the word of God in the person of Jesus Christ, so that they might be comforted, so that they might be assured, so that they might be confident that even though they die, yet shall they live.

See, Jesus did not come to relieve the political oppression of the people. He came to relieve the spiritual oppression. Politics come and go, good and bad come and go in this world. The only thing that is forever is the word of God, and the word of God has promised to bring us to a joyful praise. Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

We can say that with joy and thanksgiving as much as they did that year, 2000 years ago, because we know he has come as the lamb of God, the son of David, the son of man, the son of God, for the purpose of redeeming all of mankind. That's why when we get to the gospel lesson after our procession reading, it starts out with there were some Greeks there to worship because Jesus, it was not enough for God to come and save the Jews. It was not enough just to save the Jews. He came to save all of humanity. And so he bears the light of God into the world so that we might see and believe. But we believe not because we have seen the wonders. We believe because we have heard the word.

I think of Jesus talking about Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man died and went to hell. Lazarus went in the bosom of Abraham. The rich man sees Lazarus up there and begs him, begs him to give some water, and then eventually to send Lazarus back to his brothers that they might see and believe. And what does Abraham say? They have the law and the prophets. Even if someone would rise from the dead, they would not believe because they were looking for signs and wonders, because they were looking for satisfaction in this world, because they loved the glory of man more than the glory of God, because they were focused only on the temporary and not upon the eternal, only because they had already decided what God was supposed to do rather than listening to what God has promised to do.

And what he has promised to do, we could have never guessed. How does he save his people? By being lifted up, lifted up on the cross, suffering and dying for our sake. Out of joy, the joy to glorify his father and the joy to forgive you and me. And that is why he did it.

And so you hear attention of those who wanted to kill him. Look, what good is this doing? The whole world is following after him. Right before this, the high priest said, "It's better for one man to die for the people." Not knowing what he was saying but he was prophesying the truth. It is better for one man to die because this is the judgment of this world.

Now the ruler of this world is cast out. The judgment of this world is not God condemning us. The judgment of this world is God condemning Christ for us so that we might not be cast out, but we might be brought into his kingdom. Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. May his grace and his mercy and

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his peace be and abide with you always now and forevermore unto life everlasting.
Amen.