

Palm Sunday: “Hosannah!”  
Matthew 21: 6-17

<sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. <sup>7</sup>They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. <sup>8</sup>A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna<sup>[b]</sup> to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”<sup>[c]</sup>

“Hosanna<sup>[d]</sup> in the highest heaven!”

<sup>10</sup>When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

<sup>11</sup>The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

I’ve never read the text that follows with traditional Palm Sunday passage, but here it goes:

<sup>12</sup>Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. <sup>13</sup>“It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’<sup>[e]</sup> but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’<sup>[f]</sup>”

<sup>14</sup>The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. <sup>15</sup>But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.

<sup>16</sup>“Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him.

“Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read,

“‘From the lips of children and infants

you, Lord, have called forth your praise’<sup>[g]</sup>?”

<sup>17</sup>And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

Two great narratives from the Scriptures that actually go together... and yet I’ve never seen it before! Whoa is me!

PAUSE

How are you? By now, the newness of this pandemic has worn off, you’re tired of being home, and you want life to return to a new sense of normalcy. Many of you

are hurting. I know because I've spoken to you. PAUSE The Giddens' get the stir craziness aspect of all of this more than anybody, believe me!

In a lighthearted moment on Facebook the other day, someone posted, "And you wonder why the dog runs out of the house every time the door is opened?!"

Today, I am certain of one thing on this Palm Sunday. In the midst of uncertainty, we need a Savior. Thankfully, today is Palm Sunday... that day of the year when people couldn't help but shout, "Hosannah, Blessed is He Who Comes in the name of the Lord! Hosannah in the highest heaven!" Then in the second narrative where Jesus turns over the tables in the temple, the children were shouting and chanting "Hosannah to the Son of David." I used to think that Hosannah meant something like "Praise God" or "Thank You Lord" or maybe even "Party Time". Now I know that it means something far more important. They were yelling, "Save us... Lord, We need You to Save Us!"

PAUSE

What are some of the things in this world that we rely upon to save us?

I think about flotation devices on boats, both the old school ring and the fun orange life preserver that makes such a nice fashion statement.

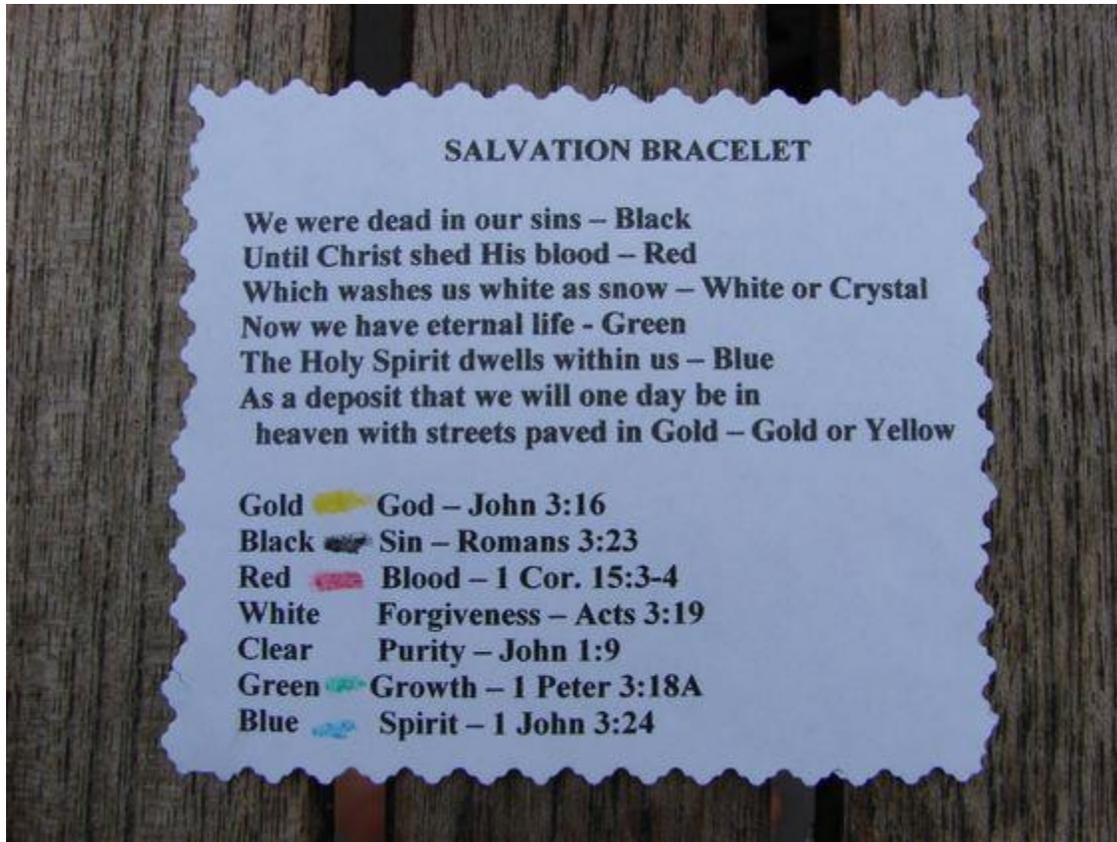
Or there are the parachutes that keep people alive after they jump out of an airplane. My grandfather knew more about this than most as he bailed out of two airplanes and survived only because of the parachute that was attached to him.

And then there is the current day debate about ventilators and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) in the current corona pandemic. While I won't go too deep into this, I think we can all agree that ventilators and PPE are another great means by which people's lives have been saved through the years.

All of these devices and more share something in common – we know when and how to use them! I don't take a parachute out at sea. Nor do I need a ventilator when jumping out of an airplane. I need the right physical equipment at the proper time. The good news is that Jesus is a life saver all the time!

I don't know if this story is true or not, but it's an awesome story nonetheless. Someone once shared with me that the reason lifesavers candy has a hole in the middle is so that if you choke on it, there is still a hole for air. And the different

colors of the candy represent different attributes of faith in Christ and how Jesus saves us... kind of like the old salvation bracelets that you may have seen. On the salvation bracelet, the colors represent different attributes of how God saves us.



I think during our at home time right now, that might be a cool project for someone to undertake... making the bracelets.

PAUSE

So we come back around to the question of “How does Jesus save us?”

He saves us by His death from all our sins: Past, present, and future. We all have broken God's law, and the wages of sin is death (see Romans 6:23). He died as a substitute for all human sinners. Therefore God was able to preserve His righteous law and government by punishing the breaking of the law while offering a pardon to those who had broken it. Matthew 5:17 says, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” That’s why Catholics have confessional booths. Jesus saves them and us from our sins as we confess our sins to him and ask forgiveness.

Second, The apostle Paul said that Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law (see Galatians 3:13). The word redeemed means to compensate for the faults or bad aspects of (something). In the old days, it meant to buy back a slave in the marketplace. Under this analogy, the death of Jesus was the "ransom" needed to set us free from the bondage of the law, sin, and death.

Third, Jesus is our hilasterion (translated "propitiation") or mercy seat, a reference to the lid or covering over the ark of the covenant. When the mercy seat was covered with the blood of a sacrifice, the law's condemnation against the people was shut out before God. Jesus Christ is our complete and only covering.

PAUSE

So now we head into Holy Week, one of the most sacred weeks of the Christian calendar year. My hope for you and me is that we will not be too quick to get done with the sacrificial nature of Holy Week that we miss the body and blood of Jesus broken and shed for us. This is the very week when the Last Supper, the betrayal in the garden by Judas, Peter's denial of Jesus in the temple courts, Pilate's washing his hands of Jesus, Simon's carrying the cross to Galgotha, and the crucifixion take place. This is the week that Jesus does not just die for our sin, but he spends three days in hell. I don't know if you knew this, but when you get back in church, look more closely at number 881, our Apostle's Creed. Jesus did not just die on the cross. In 881 as we profess our faith, there is an asterisk for further reading. Apparently the reality that Jesus descended into hell and was punished by Satan was too grim for some, so they didn't take it out, but they put it down in the footnotes. In order for Easter to have its true gloriousness, there also needs to be the aspect of how he suffered for us, a symbol of that agape love that he has for us that is beyond human comprehension.

To put it another way, we would not fully appreciate the 70 degree sunny days without a cloud in the sky if we did not know what dreary, rainy, cold days or 120 degree days were like as well. The difficult gives us a greater appreciation for good times.

And so, we head into Holy Week ready to experience yet again the sacrifice Jesus made that allows us to have life to the fullest.

PAUSE

I would like to return to v. 12 of today's text. It says,

<sup>12</sup> Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. <sup>13</sup> “It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer,’<sup>[e]</sup> but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’<sup>[f]</sup>”

Look around you in the world in which we live today. What do you see? I would like to reiterate today that in no way do I believe God caused corona to happen. But, I do believe, that this shelter in place is giving many of us an opportunity to peel back the layers of our life and to evaluate that which should be most important to us. I said before corona ever hit that I believe there are times in our lives when God asks us how we will respond when most of what we know is gone. In these moments, I believe that God is inviting us to evaluate that which is most important and if needed to redefine our priorities. For some of us, whether through an act of corona, the economy, or Almighty God, the tables have been overturned and we must turn them upright yet again and decide what will rest on top of them as we get back in the game.

For me, it’s about God, family, friends, and everything else comes below that. I imagine that if you pray and seek the Lord, your order will be similar as well.

Right after he turned over the tables, it says, <sup>14</sup> “The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them” and “children [were] shouting in the temple courts, “Hosanna to the Son of David”. As the temple officials got upset Jesus said of the children, “Have you never read, ““From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise’<sup>[g]</sup>?”, a clear reference to Psalm 8:2.

PAUSE

Prayer is the method through which we invite God in Christ Jesus to save us. How’s your prayer life? I’m going to host prayer times each Monday at 1 pm. This coming Monday, we will uplift the coming days of Holy Week and the upcoming Easter Sunday services. I will put the link for a conference call on the Facebook page, email is to you, and website front page for you to jump on. I’ll also simulcast on Facebook Live. We’ll do it weekly on Mondays at 1 pm. Prayer is especially important right now, and I would like for you to join with me in lifting up our community and world. I will invite you to email in your prayer requests and/ or to post them on the Facebook Live feed as we navigate through the time. For those of you who do not have access to Facebook, we will also offer a

conference call in number, which will allow the technologically challenged to participate as well.

Who can we pray for today? The list looks a lot like last week, but with additions. Our deepest thanks to :

WE WANT TO SAY:

# THANK YOU

- GROCERY STORE CLERKS
- MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS
- RESTAURANT WORKERS
- TRUCK DRIVERS
- WAREHOUSE WORKERS
- SANITATION EMPLOYEES
- FARMERS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.



We're praying big prayers for all of you and more that God would be with you and that you would be filled with His strength to carry on. We pray for God to continually put his hedge of protection over you and to save you from any dangers you may encounter.

We're praying for those who are sick and suffering, for families who have lost loved ones. With 100,000-240,000 Americans who may perish, by the end of this, there will not be one person untouched by the magnitude of this pandemic. We should not fear, but we should take the necessary steps to protect ourselves by sheltering in place and praying for those on the front lines as well as those who are experiencing loss right now.

And let's pray for our church. I miss you and love you. I cannot wait for the day that I get to see you again and you get to see one another. In Governor Kemp's address on Thursday, Dr. Toomy said that the curve can be bent if we continue our current measures through at least May 31. We will be out of our usual routine until at least May 1. We are in this thing for the long haul. All of us together. You hang in there. Press in to God now more than ever and know that he will save you from the circumstances in which you find yourself.

God gives us resources through which to be saved. Matt Sweat and the Crosswalk Class are still coordinating with the Sheriff's Department to offer groceries to the most vulnerable right now. The City of Dublin is doing the same. There is no shame in taking part in this opportunity. Stay in, and allow someone to help you if needed. Again, Matt's cell is 4782790196. The Governor also said in his press conference there is also an uptick in spousal and child abuse. For those needing assistance in this regard, contact DFACS (The Department of Family and Children Services) for assistance. Don't go it alone. Allow others to help.

PAUSE

This week, I encourage you to shout "Hosannah" as loud as you can from Facebook, your work, and every other place available to you. Here's a reminder of what the Scripture said today,

"Hosanna<sup>[b]</sup> to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"<sup>[c]</sup>

"Hosanna<sup>[d]</sup> in the highest heaven!"

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

When you shout Hosannah, people are going to ask you, "Who is this?" Will you be ready to tell them?

God Bless you. Be safe. Allow Jesus to save you this week, not just through eternal salvation, but in every moment you encounter.

### SALVATION MOMENT

You can be saved today simply by praying a short poem after me to invite Jesus into your heart. It says, “Jesus, You died upon a cross and rose again to save the lost. Forgive me now of all my sin, come be my Savior, Lord and friend. Change my life and make it new, and help me, Lord, to live for you.”

If you just prayed that prayer with me, you are saved. Let me know at [barrygiddens@gmail.com](mailto:barrygiddens@gmail.com) so that I can send you further resources to help you grow closer to Jesus every day.

“Lord, We invite you to Save Us All!”

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, AMEN