

Palmarum
St. Matthew 21:1-9
April 2nd, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Hosanna in the Highest!

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way. And the multitudes that went before Him, and that followed, cried, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who hast led Thy dear Son Jesus Christ through suffering and death to Thine eternal glory, and hast exalted Him at Thy right hand to be Lord of lords and King of kings: we beseech Thee, grant us Thy good Spirit, that with willing hearts we may receive Him as our King, and follow His example of true humility, that, being made perfect through sufferings, we may enter into eternal glory; through Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Palm branches have always been a symbol of victory. When we processed into the church carrying our palm branches, and when we carry them now, we are proclaiming a victory has occurred. The victory we proclaim is the eternal victory that our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ won for us, and for all mankind, upon the tree of the holy cross. He suffered and died to win an eternal victory for all of us who believe on Him, and cling to this marvelous work of His in faith; trusting that by His death, we have life eternal.

Indeed, this is how the saints are pictured in Heaven in the Revelation of + Jesus Christ to St. John. The saints gather around the throne and the Lamb of God, dressed in white and carrying palm branches in their hands. The Lamb of God has won the victory over sin and death, therefore, we can proclaim that victory is ours. We are the saints standing before the throne and the Lamb carrying the symbol of victory in our hands. Our Lord + Jesus has won for us eternal life and salvation by sacrificing Himself for us on the tree of the holy cross. He has won an eternal victory for us. When we carry our palm branches in procession, we are declaring this victory has been won for us.

This is what the multitudes were declaring when they met the Lord + Jesus as He entered into Jerusalem riding on an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass. They cut down palm and olive branches and placed them in the road before Him. This is what peoples and nations would do when the commander of their army returned victorious from the battle. When they laid palm and olive branches before the Lord + Jesus as He entered the city of King David, they were declaring that He had won the victory over His enemies. He is lauded by the multitudes as the Son of David, the inheritor of the throne of King David. In proclaiming this they were proclaiming Him to be the Messiah, the Anointed One of the

Lord God.

They cried out before and after Him, “Hosanna in the Highest!” Save us, now in the highest! The multitudes imagined a glorious victory was taking place, because the Son of David, the Messiah, had come to the city of the kings. They imagined He would take His place upon the throne of David, and rule over them; that He would rescue them from the oppression of the Gentile Romans.

But our Lord’s victory was not to be over the peoples of any nation. His victory was to be over sin, death, and the power of the devil. His throne would not be the throne of King David, but His throne would be a tree upon which He was nailed. His crown would not be the golden crown that was common among the kings of the world, but His crown would be made of thorns filled with His blood. He would not carry a rod as a scepter, but would be beaten with rods and scourged with a whip. He would not be clothed in fine raiment, but would be stripped naked and hung upon a tree.

The people shouted, “Hosanna in the Highest!” They desired the Lord + Jesus to save them now. But His salvation would not come in the form that they imagined. His salvation—His victory—would come by Him sacrificing Himself for the sins of the whole world upon the tree of the holy cross. His victory would be earned by His death. He would give His life for the atonement of the whole world, so that all those that believe on Him might have eternal life.

Palm branches have also pointed to this sacrifice of our Lord. That the victory of our Lord God would be accomplished through sacrifice has always been prefigured by the palm tree. Indeed, the temple that was built by King Solomon was covered with palm branches. Palm branches were carved into the walls of the temple, and were covered over with gold. The place where sacrifices were made for the sins of the people of Israel were covered with palm branches, prefiguring the victory that the Lord God would win through sacrifice. The blood of bulls, goats, and lambs were only a shadow of the salvation that would be accomplished through the blood of the Lamb of God. His blood would atone for the sins of the whole world.

In the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, the prophet saw these same palm branches when he beheld the vision of the heavenly temple. The temple that he describes in his prophecy also had walls covered in palm branches. The temple he foresaw was the temple of the Body of the Lord + Jesus. In His body offered on the tree of the holy cross, there would be victory; victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil. This victory would win an eternal Kingdom for all those who cling in faith to this sacrifice of our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ.

The multitudes in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew anticipated this victory when they strewed palm branches before the Lord, and shouted, “Hosanna in the Highest!” They desired the victory promised by the prophets, but our Lord’s victory would not be for an earthly kingdom, but for an everlasting heavenly Kingdom.

We also carry our palm branches today as a symbol of the victory that our Lord + Jesus won for us. We know the sacrifice that our Lord and Savior made on our behalf. We know what that victory cost Him. It cost Him the burden of carrying our sins upon Himself on the tree of the cross. He won our victory by His death. He suffered and died on our behalf. He was crucified for us. And He has won the victory over sin and death, and won for us an eternal Kingdom in Heaven with Him and all the saints and angels who stand before the throne, and before the Lamb in white robes, and carry in their hands the palm branches of victory.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us lift high our palm branches this day. For, our Lord has won for an eternal home in Heaven. These palms are symbolic of the victory that He has won for us. They point forward to the day when we will be with the multitudes of the heavenly host, where we will sing forever

and ever, "All glory, laud and honor" For worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to obtain victory and salvation for us. He has promised us this eternal Kingdom in the promises of His holy Word, and He sustains us in faith to believe this promise through the means of grace. Wherein the Holy Ghost strengthens and preserves us steadfast in the one true faith until we reach our heavenly home; until we reach the land where we will celebrate the victory of the Lamb of God over sin and death, forever and ever world without end. Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!