

Palm Sunday/March 28, 2021  
Mark 10:35-45/Blessed is He  
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church  
Pastor Jerry Stobaugh

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Today we begin the commemoration of the most important week the world has ever known. During this week we pay special attention to Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection, the events that give us forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. This week is so important we need eight days to get it all in. It starts, today, on Palm Sunday and ends on Easter. This week we the event that leads to our weekly communion, the sadness of Good Friday and also the happiness of Easter. We call this week Holy Week for good. To the church, this is most important week in history as this is the culmination of why the very Son of God was born that blessed Christmas day, so He could fulfill all prophecy for our salvation in this one week.

Holy Week begins on that first Palm Sunday where people shouted praises and threw clothing and tree branches in front of Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

The people were very excited, but most of them didn’t really understand why it was so important for Jesus to come to Jerusalem. They didn’t know that a few days would bring great sadness to their hearts as the temple authorities arrested Jesus and gave Him to the Romans for crucifixion. These same people who were so happy on Palm Sunday would cry on Friday as they watched Messiah die on the cross. They would wonder how the Messiah could die such a terrible and shameful death.

The man, who wrote the hymn we sang as our opening hymn, understood. In the second verse, he wrote the words: “Ride on, Ride on, in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die. O Christ, Thy triumphs now begin O’er captive death and conquered sin.” He knew Jesus was coming to Jerusalem to die on the cross for our sins.

There is so much to think about when we think about all the events during Holy Week. Where should we start? The right place to start is in our own hearts. When we look to our hearts, we see sin as convicted by the Law. Then when we look at the cross, we see God’s punishment for sin, His justice for all sin.

The Bible says, [Deu 21:22-23] “And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God.” Think about the cross. Was Jesus on the cross because He sinned? No! Was He on the cross because He committed a crime leading to the death penalty? No! He was on the cross because He wanted to take away the sins of the world, yours, mine and everyone’s sins. He wanted to take away the curse of death and eternal damnation.

We earned the punishment Christ accepted. We earn it every time we forget to make God first in our lives. We earn the cross every time we forget to love our neighbor. How many times is that? I don’t know. I sin more than I can count, but each and every sin earns that cross, the punishment and shame of the cross. Our sin earns a punishment we can’t possibly pay. The cross shows us how much God hates and punishes sin.

Yes, the cross shows God’s justice, but it also shows God’s love. Here on the cross the Son talks to the Father for us. This is Jesus’ work. He says, “Father, forgive them. They don’t know what they

do.” He says, “Father, those soldiers are evil men. They mock me. They earned your punishment. Don’t punish them. Punish me instead.” He said to the thief, “Today, you will be with me in paradise.” He says, “Father, this man is a thief. He earned your punishment. Don’t punish him. Punish me instead.”

The love He shows on the cross is for all people. He says, “Father, I see those sinners in Oakland. I see people who fight with their brothers and sisters. I see people who don’t always love their neighbors. Punish me instead of them.” This is the sign of grace we see on the cross.

Here at the cross, we see God’s justice and His grace. We see grace that is bigger than we can understand. This is what the Bible verse means, that Gospel in a nutshell, when it says: [John 3:16] “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

The cross shows us sin earns punishment. It also shows us God gives us grace. He didn’t punish me or you, but e punished His own son instead. The cross before gave us fear, but now gives us grace.

We enter this world with sin, but the cross lets us confess those sins and give it to God because God already placed those sins on the cross and died with His son. We can stand before God and say, “Father, I sin daily and earn your eternal punishment, but I am sorry about my sin and truly repent. I ask you to forgive my sins because I trust your son, Jesus Christ. He died and conquered sin for me.”

You should know the Father will forgive you because He called Jesus out of the grave and Jesus rose from the dead. Through the resurrection God declares the victory Jesus earned for you on the cross. Your sins are dead, but Jesus is alive. His resurrection gives

you the promise you too will rise and live with him forever in the heavens and the new earth.