

The people of Jerusalem recognized that Palm Sunday the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, their king, coming to them -righteous, having salvation; they shout in the words of Psalm 118. **Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.** They recognize this is the Messiah, the Christ, the same way you do; by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. They know God's Word recorded by the prophets, David, they rejoice at the coming salvation, and then for good measure, as recorded in Matthew, Mark, they tack on the additional praise **Hosanna in the highest.** The phrase **in the highest.** Where have you heard that before? Luke records, **Blessed is the King that comes in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.** Do you see? This event, this hymn of praise, is tied to the song of the angels at Bethlehem.

This week is why we, you celebrate Christmas, why Christmas even matters. This week gives all meaning to Christmas and all meaning to your entire life. Each day of your life.

That is behind your praise: **Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!** Hosanna- Save us Lord, There's no greater hymn of praise than the hymn that asks God to be gracious to us. **Hosanna.** Every Sunday, every Sacrament, 1000s of years God's people crying out. How else are you going to greet your Lord who comes to you in the Sacrament no less than He came that day.

That's what He wants us to ask for. **Hosanna!** Desperate for Jesus Himself to save. He still comes, Himself to speak absolution to you, to bring you His life-giving, life-sustaining Word, humble and lowly riding in to give His very life in the Supper; by praying *Hosanna*, He actually does it, by giving you His body and blood, your Lord comes to you with mercy and forgiveness, comes to comfort you like nothing else can; promise to be with you always.

Holy Week, the most important week in human history, the most important week of your life. All the dark secrets of your heart are exposed too. You are there in Judas' betrayal, in Peter's denial, in the hateful crowd that chose Barabbas, you are even Barabbas. You are in the political correctness of Pilate, in the cruelty of the Roman guards, in fair-weather followers, in cowardly disciples. Yet here is your only hope. Repent and rejoice. For the Son of Man is lifted up to draw you to Himself.

Whoever loves his life loses it, whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. One must follow Him. Not your own ideas, not loving the world and yourself. **Lose your life and gain it.** He is your

life, you are not your own; you are His. You've been purchased with His blood. Apart from Christ, you will not know true forgiveness, love, peace, or comfort. Apart from Christ, only man's vain attempts, no real life at all.

This is Passion Sunday, the older, more historic name for Palm Sunday. "Passion" intense love, fervent devotion, intense. The word comes from the Latin passus, to suffer, His love is shown in its greatest, in His suffering. His suffering and death -the Passion- His intense love that drove Him to die for rebels, for us, who mocked His divinity, who thought they knew better than He what makes for happiness, who've lusted, who've told lies, who have gossiped, been lazy, who desire revenge on those who have hurt or insulted them, who've stolen, who've neglected their duty; who pretend to be things that they're not. Lord have mercy on us all.

I hope you all, confirmands of yesteryear and confirmand this year, see, you're hopelessly sinful, completely helpless. Your natural instinct -to put yourself first, do whatever pleases you. God condemns "Me first!" The world will tell you 'be who you are, follow your heart.' that philosophy will lead to eternal death.

His Kingly love, despite your sin, filth, disease -how very precious you are to God, so intense, forgives all your sins. Removes every not-so-nice thought, every bad deed, every shameful, despicable act we hope our mothers never know. His Kingly love has deemed you worthy the price of His life.

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified...And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. All creation, past, present, future looks to a day we call Good. What's so incredible is how Jesus refers to His crucifixion as His glory. He sheds His blood to have you. The only way, the way He loves and brings life. **Unless a grain dies, it bears much fruit.** And He has. He has brought forth much fruit. And He calls this fruit, _____, all of you. You are the fruit of Jesus' death, the reward for His victory. He was lifted up from the earth, dead, buried, deliberately, that He would bring forth you, draw you unto Himself. All this for you. His passion to save you. This is why the saints in heaven rejoice this week, hold their palms. Let us do the same, mingle our praise with theirs. *

Let this week heal your sin-sick soul, bind up your broken heart, restore your courage and faith. Rejoice and sing Hosanna. For you are His beloved, now and forevermore. Blessed is Jesus who comes today, in the name of the Lord.

_____, your King comes to you today as in no other way on earth, with the greatest of treasures, give you His very body, blood that you life forever. This faith given to you in baptism, will starve without His life-giving nourishment of His Word and Sacrament here to feed you, heal you, sustain you, rescue you, bring you to eternal life. You need His Word, this Supper, more than any other need in your life, that you be filled with Him. What else is there to life? What else truly matters.

The promise God spoke in heaven at your Baptism is still good. It always will be