

## Hosanna!

✠ Saved from desperate evil (vv.1-11)

✠ Blessed with the highest joy (vv.12-19)

*“Hosanna!*

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*

*Blessed is the King of Israel!”*

Were you ever in a city when they won a major championship? I’ll never forget how the streets of eastside Milwaukee filled up around the University campus when the Brewers won the American League Pennant for the 1982 World Series. If armed guards had stood at the doors, the students would have jumped out the windows. If martial law declared, “No cheering!” no one would have been silent. And as much as we try to understand from great victories of our own Minnesota Twins, we can’t come close to the joy of the Jewish people on the first Palm Sunday 2,000 years ago. God’s people had been hoping for centuries, through kings and prophets, wars and exile. At last the Messiah had come! But a week later His disciples would lament: *“We hoped he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.”* (Luke 24:21) **Hosanna!** But how could crowds go from full blown cheering to shouts of “Crucify him!” in less than a week? They missed something. We are...

✠ Saved from desperate evil (vv.1-11)

*“Six days before the Passover”* puts Jesus in Bethany the Friday before Palm Sunday. He liked to stay with His dear friends Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. You’re right if you remember shortly before this in John 11, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. No day would ever be the same as they saw Lazarus as living proof that Jesus is Lord of life and death. Matthew and Mark report this dinner for Jesus was at the home of Simon the Leper. They do not identify the woman, but the Holy Spirit inspired John to supply that detail many years later. Mary gave most beautiful, humble service to our Lord.

On Jesus’ feet and His head Mary poured some very expensive perfume. (Cf. Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9) Just as a humble subject would anoint a king, so she gave Jesus this great honor. John was obviously an eyewitness because he reports: *“The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”*

We should ask ourselves: Do I serve Jesus in such deep humility? Do I give Him my very best? If today after the Offering your pastor would burn the money on the altar, you might have more appreciation for Judas’ question. Isn’t it logical to ask, “Why this waste?” For fifteen centuries burnt offerings were totally consumed by fire. Drink offerings of fine wine were poured over them. Let’s face it: Giving to God makes no sense to sinful souls, making this is one example of the **desperate evil** from which Christ came to save us. But for Judas there was more. He was a hypocrite with dirty hands. As treasurer for the Twelve, his sticky fingers dipped into the donations as desired. He had no care for the poor at all, only for himself. Betraying Jesus would fit the pattern like a gold ring in pig’s snout.

Marvel how our dear Lord Jesus protects Mary **from desperate evil** aimed at her. And when you realize how determined He is to do the same for you, it’s a great day. *“Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “She has treasured this for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”* Don’t you love how Jesus stands up for His own while teaching us vital lessons?

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from a draft translation by the undersigned for the Wartburg Project – John.

First, He predicts again His own death and burial. Jesus is not the confused individual Hollywood likes to portray in annual Easter mockeries of the Lord's Christ. Jesus saw the **desperate evil** of our sins. In love He pressed on to fulfill His Father's will and save us from hell, for eternity in heaven with Him.

He says you cannot end poverty: ***"The poor you will always have with you."*** In other places He tells of our responsibility to share with neighbors in need. Not other people's money in some "war on poverty," but use your own money. Honor God by helping your neighbor.

While most conservative Christians have no problem with that, we do have trouble with our priorities. We sometimes hear in our own circles not to "waste" money on church furnishings or musical instruments or art – because, "It should be used for \_\_\_\_\_." When it comes to giving and doing for God, "waste" is not the way He looks at it. Neither should we. As it turned out, Mary's gift for Jesus was the only funeral anointing He received. The rush of Good Friday and Easter morning prevented it.

Judas was not the only hypocrite shifting into high gear. The high priests saw followers slipping away to Jesus and got jealous. A resurrected Lazarus was a real drag on their popularity. Their solution: *Kill him again!* The lesson for us: Hypocrites are hard to identify unless you can read someone's heart. Who would have guessed Judas? Or the high priests? Jesus let them be. He came first to save sinners. He will come back to punish hypocrites on Judgment Day. Surrounded by **desperate evil** and struggling against the sins of our own hearts, we need to focus on Jesus like Mary. **Hosanna!** Worship the Lord humbly with the best you have. In Christ we are **Saved from desperate evil** and eternally...

### ✠ **Blessed with the highest joy (vv.12-19)**

Like any great victory celebration it was all so spontaneous. Crowds had followed from Galilee and Bethany. So impressed by Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, they could not keep quiet about it. When the pilgrims in Jerusalem for the great Passover Festival heard Jesus was coming, they picked up palm branches to go out and meet their King. Scholars say eastern kings rode donkeys when they came in peace. But not one of them was predicted centuries earlier like Jesus in today's Old Testament Lesson: ***"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth."*** (Zechariah 9:9f NIV84) Look closer at Jesus and be **Blessed with the highest joy!**

How could His disciples scheme to make this up? They did not even understand until after Jesus' glorious resurrection and ascension! ***"Look!"*** says the prophet. ***"I will see with my own eyes!"*** says Job as he rises from despair: ***"I know that my Redeemer lives!"*** (19:25-27) King Jesus brings universal, lasting peace for heart and mind, body and soul. ***"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."*** (Colossians 1:19f NIV84) This calls for faith now, but, ***"Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen."*** (Revelation 1:7 NIV84)

Pray God your family, friends and neighbors will turn and believe before it's too late! Pray for a championship heart that cannot and will not be quiet no matter what. What friendship, what relationship is more important than a single soul enjoying heaven with God? Risk it all. Each one bring one.

From **Hosanna!** to "Crucify!" From palm branch to bloody crown of thorns Sunday to Friday. There was no other way. Still today we must pick up our cross and follow Jesus through the cross to the crown. Glorified with Him, ***"then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."*** (1 Corinthians 13:12) **Hosanna! Saved from desperate evil. Blessed with the highest joy.** Glory be to Jesus! Amen.

For the study behind this sermon or for copies email [m.cordes@comcast.net](mailto:m.cordes@comcast.net) .  
You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at [www.wels.us/newlife](http://www.wels.us/newlife) .

New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church  
180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126