

Hosanna

April 10, 2021

Fr. Jacob Bush

When I was growing up, I always got excited when Palm Sunday arrived. My excitement was caused by selfishness, of course, by the realization that Easter was only a week away and I would be getting chocolate. It wasn't because of the Palm Sunday Scriptures, or the excitement of what Good Friday and Easter mean. No, I just wanted chocolate. It wasn't until I got older that I understood the meaning of Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter. Can you relate?

Looking back on that now I can see parallels with the thoughts and attitudes of the disciples and all those who were in Jerusalem. They didn't get the significance of Palm Sunday either initially. In fact, it wasn't until they received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost that the disciples really understood what had happened.

Remember, the people in Israel expected that the Messiah would restore the land to Israel. They expected Jesus to overthrow the Romans. But that didn't happen. Jesus did not come to be a political leader. If He did, he wouldn't have ridden into Jerusalem on a donkey. He would've ridden into town on a horse. He came the first time to free us from the bondage of sin. It is true that Jesus is the King which is why his disciples were shouting, "blessed is the king who comes in the Name of the Lord," which comes from Psalm 118:26.

Did you notice the reaction of the Pharisees? They wanted to silence the disciples. They asked Jesus to silence His disciples. Why? Because they understood that they were referring to Jesus as the Messiah. How did Jesus respond? He told them plainly, "if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" The Newsboys sang a song based on this verse in their album, "Take Me to your Leader." The point of the song is the line, "God is not a secret to be kept."

Fast forward to Good Friday. Do you remember what happened after Jesus died? Matthew 27:50-51, "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split." The disciples were silent that day, and the rocks cried out.

Another instance of religious leaders trying to silence the truth is found in Matthew 21:15-16, "But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became indignant ¹⁶and said to Him, "Do You hear what these *children* are saying?" And again Jesus rebuked them saying, "Yes; have you never read, 'OUT OF THE MOUTH OF INFANTS AND NURSING BABIES YOU HAVE PREPARED PRAISE FOR YOURSELF'?"

In both instances, Jesus defended those that declared that He is the Messiah. And the word, 'Hosanna' which is simply an acclamation of praise, was used both times. The children and the disciples were shouting praise to Jesus the Messiah and the religious leaders at that time did not like it, and tried to silence it, and Jesus rebuked them for trying to stop the praise. The children and the disciples had it right. They were right to praise Jesus and declare Him to be the Messiah even if they didn't fully understand His mission.

For us, we have the benefit of the Holy Spirit. We understand why Jesus came the first time. It wasn't to overthrow the Romans, it was to free us from the power of sin and death, and from the power of Satan.

Because of Christ we don't have to be Jews before we are in the covenant community. Remember that was a debate in the Church in the early days. We don't have to follow the Ceremonial Law because Christ fulfilled it. The Moral Law, yes. But not the Ceremonial Law.

Because of Christ there are no second-class citizens in the Kingdom. As St. Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." And in today's culture I would add that there is neither black nor white. We are all one in Christ Jesus. Together members of His body.

This would not be the case had Christ not come to die on the cross for our sins. Had Christ not died on the cross for our sins we would still need to sacrifice animals for our sins. The Ceremonial Law would still be in force. Had Christ not come to die on the cross for our sins we would all have to be Jews to be part of the covenant community. Everybody else would be on the outside looking in. But praise God this is not the case. Christ did come to die for our sins. He is the perfect sacrifice. He fulfilled the Law. So that now all who believe and trust in Him are citizens of the kingdom of God, not just those who are of Jewish heritage, but those of every nation, tribe, and tongue.

We all have sinned and are in need of forgiveness. We need to be reconciled to God. And because of Christ we are reconciled to God, and can have forgiveness of sins and eternal life, and it is only because of Christ. This is good news! Christ is worthy of our exclamation of praise, our hosanna! He is our triumphant King! And the only question is, what are we going to do about it? Will we shout out with love for Him and praise or will we give in to those who want us silenced?

In this world there are many who would rather we remain silent. Their hearts are hard, and they do not want to hear the truth even though they need to do so. They refuse to believe the truth even though doing so will result in eternal life. They refuse to acknowledge the reality of sin. Pray that God would break their hearts of stone and give them hearts for Him alone.

And do not remain silent. As Jesus said, "if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" Do we want to praise God ourselves or just let the stones cry out? Jesus Christ is Lord! In Him we have eternal life! He is the only Way. That truth is better than chocolate. And proclaiming that truth is way better. And eternal life with Him is sweeter and tastier. So, praise be to God! Let your hosannas ring!

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!