



Wave Your Palms!

Zechariah 9:9 Psalm 118:19-26
Revelation 7: 9-17 John 12: 12-16

March 24, 2024

Pastor Dave Bolte

The Distinctive Feature Of Palm Sunday is of course, the Palms. The Bible teaches us that on that first Palm Sunday, the people were so excited to welcome Jesus that they scrambled to cut palm branches. They would wave them in the air in celebration and excitement; and some would lay them in the road for Him to travel over as a sign of honor and respect. In our Gospel lesson from St. John, it said,

They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" John 12:13

Waving palm branches was a symbol of victory; it was an ancient custom on honoring someone special, someone like a King. Ancient coins often times had palms imprinted on them to honor the king¹. And indeed, Jesus was a King.

That first Palm Sunday was predicted 100's of years earlier ... Both of our Old Testament readings today are prophecies that come true on Palm Sunday:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9

Hosanna!, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord. Psalm 118:25-26

¹ If you like coins, then you might find this article about Palms on coins interesting:
https://www.forumancientcoins.com/moonmoth/reverse_branches.html

That's what was happening on the very first Palm Sunday; God's People recognized their King, they received Him, and they rejoiced because of Him. *The waving of the palm branches was an outward expression of the joy and the faith in their hearts.*

This morning, as we celebrate Palm Sunday, we wave palms as well,

- In remembrance of the victory that Christ has earned for us by His death and resurrection,
- as a sign of our honor and praise to our King, and
- as an expression of our faith in Jesus as our Savior.

Palm Sunday is certainly the peak of the Lenten season. For nearly forty days, since Ash Wednesday, we have been patiently traveling through this penitential season, figuratively sitting in sackcloth and ashes. Lent is brutal, if you take it seriously, in remembering the depths of your sinfulness and the thorough corruption that sin brings into your life.

Palm Sunday is a light that lightens our load, as we rejoice that our Savior has come to Jerusalem to rescue us from our sinfulness, and its corruption. Palm Sunday is like our last gasp of air before we travel the dark road of Holy Week, which culminates in the death and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

But that is why this King entered Jerusalem. He is not going to set up an earthly Kingdom, but He's going to create an eternal Kingdom through His death and resurrection on the Third Day. The long-awaited Old Testament Messiah, the promised Son of

King David, is entering Jerusalem to do the work so that we can live in the Kingdom of God now, and the Kingdom of Heaven later.

The joy and celebration of Palm Sunday leads to the agony and sorrow of Good Friday. *That's because each and every one of us needed Good Friday, more than we need Palm Sunday.*

Good Friday is where Christ died for us. It is there where our sins were nailed to a cross, it was there where Judgement Day occurred for those who would believe. The darkness, the earthquakes, and the agonizing cry "*My God My God, why have you forsaken me?*" was all **for you**; to show you that Christ was facing the judgment that you deserve for your sins. Because of His excruciatingly painful work, you are reconciled with God the Father. You are part of His family. You receive all the gifts of salvation as an inheritance. By faith, you are brought into the Eternal Kingdom that Christ has established.

Its no wonder people were crying out "*Hosanna!*" on that first Palm Sunday. They recognized that something special was happening, they knew that there was something different about Jesus; you could tell by His authoritative teaching, and His jaw-dropping miracles. Of course, they had no idea what was about to happen that week in Jerusalem. But yet, by the power of the Holy Spirit, they make the connection to the prophecies of Zechariah and the Psalms. As they wave their palm branches, they are praying "*Hosanna, blessed to see who comes in the name of the Lord!*"

HOSANNA means "Save us", and that is exactly what Jesus was doing. He has saved us from sin, death, the devil and the world by His terrible suffering, sacrificial death and His powerful resurrection.

In faith, we join with all those people on Palm Sunday, as if time and distance were no issue. We join them, waving palms, and crying out, ***“Hosanna, blessed to see who comes in the name of the Lord!”***

But neither the very first Palm Sunday, not our celebration today, can even compare to the one to come: that day in the Kingdom of Heaven when we sing our praise to Christ in our glorified bodies with the entire Holy Christian Church of all time and all places! Let me show it to you.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” Revelation 7:9-10

How ironic that palm branches are in our hands in Heaven! This is a picture of the Church Triumphant: of those who have died in the faith, of those who ***“have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*** Your loved ones who have died in the faith are already in this picture . Someday, you will be in this picture. Someday, all of us will be standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb, with palm branches in our hands, shouting our Hosanna’s! **THE LORD HAS SAVED US ALL!** That will be the greatest Palm Sunday celebration ever!

So get used to waving your palms ... because the Day is coming, and it is coming soon, when you will be standing in front of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of all kings and the Lord of all Lords, waving your palms and singing your praises with the entire holy Christian Church! Amen!

Jesus, you are the promised King,
the Son of King David, who rules forever.
We thank You for Your grace that brought us
into Your Kingdom;
we praise You for Your Holy Word which
teaches us about Your Kingdom;
and we ask for your Holy Spirit so that we
may live faithful lives of faith that glorify You
and Your Father in Heaven.
As we begin Holy Week,
grant us a deep faith and understanding
of your great love and sacrifice for us,
and let us rejoice in your resurrection from
the dead on the Third Day!
Amen!

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Psalms 118:19-26

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰ This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹ I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

²³ This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

²⁵ Hosanna!, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success!

²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord.

Revelation 7: 9-17

⁹After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." ¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" ¹⁴I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵"Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his

presence. ¹⁶They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

John 12: 12-16

¹²The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” ¹⁴And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ¹⁵“Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!” ¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.