"Listen to Jesus Say 'Yes!'" -- Matthew 21:12-17

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Emmett, Idaho
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Palm Sunday - The Confirmation of
Chance Scott & Nahrit Trairatnobhas

"Posterity shall serve Him;
men shall tell of the Lord to
the coming generation,
And proclaim His deliverance
to a people yet unborn,
that He has wrought it."
Psalm 22:30-31

Dear Baptized,

There is a certain attitude among some who maintain by confession, as well as enforce in practice, the insistence that children should be seen and not heard. Such compelled silence is dictated in general by the mouth monitors and is especially demanded when the children are in the holy place. This is reinforced by the false notion that children really don't have anything worthwhile to say ... that they are not old enough, or wise enough, or experienced enough to open their mouths with anything worthwhile.

That, dear children of God, is not the attitude that Jesus has. He does not agree with this, and in fact, Jesus defends and speaks well of the children who open their mouths to make confession concerning Him, particularly when they do so in the holy place. On this Palm Sunday when two of the older children of the congregation will confirm the confession of faith spoken at their baptisms, the sermon is based on the Gospel Reading. Therefore, hear the words of St. Matthew once more and ...

"Listen to Jesus Say, 'Yes!'"

"And Jesus entered the temple of God and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple and He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, 'It is written, "My House shall be called a house of prayer"; but you make it a den of robbers." And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant; and they said to Him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast brought perfect praise'? Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there."

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

There are but days before Jesus' sin-atoning death is accomplished on the cross and, before "it is

finished," the Incarnate Son of God will enter the Holy City. Do you not see Him doing so? Behold, the King of creation makes His triumphant entry into Jerusalem riding a beast of burden. "Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!'" (Matthew 21:9).

There are children among the multitudes who have been drawn to Jesus and are led by Him along the narrow Way and inside the gates of the City. These little ones hear the hosannas proclaimed by the adults and these children learned of Jesus because "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). Certainly the Lord wants the children to hear the Word and learn of the Savior. That is what catechism instruction is all about ... to hear the Word of God, to grow in the faith that God gives and to be an active member of the congregation as it follows the Lord. For example, what does "hosanna" mean? "Hosanna" is a Hebrew expression that means "save" and as the congregation sings "Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest" the children are not only learning one of the hymns of Christendom but are actively participating in the song of Our Redeemer.

But let's get back to the Palm Sunday processional as it now winds its way through the streets and to the Temple, for Jesus will most certainly lead the children to His Father's House, ah yes, to the House of prayer where they may hear the Word of God and offer their perfect praises to the LORD God Almighty. So what do they hear when they enter the holy place? Hmm. The children hear the voices, not of men reading the Word, but of the fund-raisers as the church leaders hawk pigeons for profit and sell their birthright for a bowl of red stew. The holy place, intended by God to be a house of prayer, has become a den of thieves where the clanking of the coins symbolizes the fleecing of the sheep.

In righteous anger Jesus cleanses the Temple, driving out both those who bought and those who sold.

Dear children, do you not see what Jesus has done for you? He turns the tables on the moneychangers and unseats the quisling characters, driving them outside the holy place in order to create and sanctify a place for you inside the holy place. The children are now inside with Jesus for they are His disciples, that is, His followers and He has lead them inside the gates of the City, through the entryway of the Temple and right into the holy place of God. Look and listen to what happens as a result of Jesus ridding the Temple of the thieves. "Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the Temple and He healed them. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' they were indignant."

Let's stop here for a moment. You do realize that children will repeat what they hear others say, especially their parents. Now that can be either a good thing or an awful thing. To demonstrate what is meant, consider whether or not you would encourage your children to share in a public place like this what they hear you or others say at home. On the one hand, that can be a bit unsettling for mom and dad since what parents say and what they permit their children to listen to, are not always pleasing to the Lord or easy on the ear for those around. On the other hand, that can be a fantastic occasion, like the time a child stands before the altar and, because of all the memory work done at home and all the times when the sounds of the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed is heard, a confession of the faith is confirmed.

That was the sort of situation for the children who were shouting out in the temple on that palm-

waving day. The children in the temple had earlier heard the adults say, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" They were repeating what they had heard and been taught. The children offered and uttered perfect praise for God had prepared a place for them in His Holy House and provided the opportunity for instruction in the Word. That is what has been provided for you, Chance and Alex, continued, active catechesis at home and from church.

But remember, perfect praise is not just children making noise. Perfect praise is not necessarily taking place with the act of crying out or speaking in the Presence of the LORD. The children were offering perfect praise not only in their singing and chanting and confessing, but also and particularly with the content of what is coming out of their mouths is the truth. This is what the enemies of God hated ... not that the children were shouting "Hosanna" in the Temple, ... but rather they became irate because of what the children were saying. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant; and they said to Him, "Do you hear what these are saying?"

What really incensed these church leaders was the content of what the children were saying. The children were in the Temple making a confession of who Jesus is ... the Son of David. This was a Hebrew phrase that denoted the Messiah. So here in the Temple the religious leaders have Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Son of God that they hate so much and are actively seeking to kill Him, and the children are crying out in the temple: "Save us, Jesus, for You are the Messiah!" At this declaration of the truth and at this confession of Who Jesus is and what He has come to do, the chief priests and the scribes were indignant; and they said to Him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes

Listen to Jesus say, "yes" as He answers His enemies who were inside the Temple but outside the Kingdom. "Yes, I hear what they are saying and it is true. Yes, I hear them and it is perfect praise because they are not offended at Me as you religious leaders are. Yes, I hear them, for the Holy Spirit has worked faith in their hearts so that ‘Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast brought perfect praise'? Yes, I hear them and the children are encouraged to praise God and they do so when they speak the truth, that is, when they declare the liberating dogmas of the Christian faith. This is one of those blessed, foundational doctrines ... the Savior is Jesus is the Christ. "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

This is not only a confession of Christ and a praise to the LORD, it is also a prayer, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" - that is, "Save, Son of David!" Do you think that God will not answer this prayer of perfect praise offered unto Him by His children? He most certainly will do this, not because the children petitioned Him, but because this plan of salvation is from eternity and has been promised by the Lord. The children have simply been taught that this is what the Lord would do and as a result of hearing the Word, they cry out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" - that is, "Save, Son of David!"

To do that ... to be the Savior and save us from the consequences of our sins, He must shed His Blood that we might be forgiven of all our sins. To the time in the Temple when the blessed confession of the children in the presence of many witnesses was heard, Jesus Christ had been conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. In order to save us from our sins, the Son of David must suffer under Pontius Pilate, be crucified, die and be buried. In order to defeat death and gain the victory for us, Jesus must descend into hell, rise again from the dead, and ascend into heaven. This is all ahead and will commence at the upcoming Passover.

So Jesus "left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there." Jesus leaves the temple made with man's hands, for the Temple of Salvation is the Body of Christ. Jesus leaves the enemies of God behind, those religious, blood-thirsty men who seek to silence Jesus and the children. He leaves them behind for He must go forward on their behalf and atone for all their sins on the cross as well as the sins of all people - yours and mine included.

Later in the week the Savior will leave behind those who were blind and the lame, for He will go forth that they might be healed for eternity. Jesus will leave behind the children of God, for He will accomplish their salvation in order they might be among the Revelation's throng whom the Apostle John saw "standing before the Throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God Who sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb!"

You are invited to return to this holy place this Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and Easter Sunday to "Listen to Him! Today, we hear Jesus say, "Yes!" The Lord willing, later in the week we will listen to Him say on Thursday, "You Are Clean" and on Friday, His final Word from the cross, "Into Thy Hands." A week from today, on the Festival of the Resurrection of Our Lord, you are invited to come and "Listen to Him Say Your Name." Amen.