

Good morning once again pilgrim partners. We begin to speak this morning of the final week of our Savior's earthly pilgrimage. We might ask ourselves the question today, "Would I knowingly go to a place I knew I would be put to death?" Jesus did. And He did it knowingly, because He knew it would be for you. In the Gospel lesson from Mark 11 we read that as Jesus and His disciples got close to Jerusalem, the prophecies (just as we also read earlier from Zechariah) were fulfilled about the King who would ride into Jerusalem on a colt. Multitudes of people from the nearby villages went before and after Him shouting Hosanna in the Highest! What did they mean by those words? What happened next? Many might have wondered, "What will this King do?" We see these thoughts immediately in:

**Matthew 21:10** And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" **11** So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." **12** Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. **13** And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" **14** Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. **15** 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 **16** and 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 nursing infants You have perfected praise'?" **17** Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

This is the Word of God given to you for your earthly pilgrimage... dear blood bought souls of Christ. May Christ be with us this morning and throughout this week as we observe the truths He shares for our eternal good...and, as our theme suggests, as we **OBSERVE THE AGE – OF HOSANNA!**

We **OBSERVE THE AGE – OF HOSANNA...** first from the people we read about in the Gospel of Mark chapter 11. These people had heard that this Jesus was some kind of a prophet and King who was headed to Jerusalem. You know what was in Jerusalem at that time don't you? Romans! The Jewish nation was under oppression by the Romans and was hopeful for someone to deliver them. Could it be this Jesus? Was that what He was there to do? Not surprisingly then, as we see in verse **10** **When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"** Many eyebrows probably were raised wondering why such honor and praise were given to this Jesus from the non impressive land of Nazareth, riding on a non impressive donkey, accompanied by non impressive fishermen for disciples. Why such excitement? In reality, what we see here from these crowds of Jews was a non impressive recall of the many prophetic signs of what Jesus had really come to do. Jesus wasn't there to set them free from the physical bonds of Roman oppression. Jesus Christ – God's Anointed Messiah – had come to set every person ever born, free from the spiritual bonds of sins' damnation! For all intensive purposes... they had the wrong guy for what they wanted Jesus to be.

In these large crowds we might observe that most likely there were both young and old with the misconception of who Jesus really was. How awful for us to learn how many of the same people who were praising Jesus with shouts of "Hosannas" would in less than a week be cursing Jesus and screaming "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" But STOP. **OBSERVE THE AGE – OF HOSANNA...** this time not in the AGES of people but of the AGES of History. We observe the same today in our own age. We LIVE in an age growing more and more not in praising God for example, in His undeserved mercy given in Baptism, but in cursing His name in paying five dollars for getting de-baptized! **OBSERVE THE AGE – OF HOSANNA...** where God's Word is given glory but only in the parts that are not INCONVENIENT to my own, personal, "quality of life." Wait a minute pastor! "Quality of life" refers to someone on their death bed. I reply, Yes it does... but when someone gives up any part of God's Word of truth for their own "quality of life," they are heading in the direction of a spiritual death bed.

Is this age any different than the one Jesus walked in 2000 years ago? **12 Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 13 And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "** How many so called “teachers of the Bible” are belly servers (that is, those that are doing it for selfish gain or their own selfish agenda)? How many books, both non fiction and fiction, are out there with their own “interpretation” of God’s plan, in ‘How You Can Become a Better You.?’ **OBSERVE THE AGE – OF HOSANNA... THIS** age, where faith is placed in the wrong kind of King and where excited crowds are not getting the answers to the same question asked as in verse **10... “Who is this...(Jesus)?”** Easy question! And Paul wrote to Philippians all about it (2:5-11 –back of bulletin).

Jesus’ words in our text from Matthew points back to observing what the children in the temple courts heard and saw. **14 Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.** Yet another prophecy fulfilled in Jesus as it had been foretold about His coming. The prophet Isaiah said that, ***Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. (35:5,6)*** Such wonderful things seen in Christ sparked different reactions. **15 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 16 and 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 nursing infants You have perfected praise'?"**

When we **OBSERVE THE AGE – OF HOSANNA...** as here, we see that age has nothing to do with it. Paul said that ***the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).*** It is God that moves sinful hearts to believe. For God alone is the One who gives not only the breath of life, but the breath of faith! The children in the temple were breathing these shouts of praise that Christ had kindled in them by His Words of forgiveness and healing. In child like faith we too echo those praises this morning as we rejoice in the same healing forgiveness given to us through Christ’s Word. We have much to be healed from! I have asked the catechism class here at the school what they’d think if this church was ever changed to a strip club or a casino (which by the way is going on in other parts of the world). You can imagine their reaction! But imagine our Heavenly Father’s reaction to you and me who daily use our lives and these bodily temples for unholy things! Filthy mouths, hurtful words, sexual immorality, greediness, disrespectfulness, and so on and so on. Santa shouldn’t have to think twice about whose naughty or nice for anyone. And Satan plays of this as he tempts and begs us to do more.

So, we must **OBSERVE THE AGE – OF HOSANNA...** in this age of wickedness and sin just as it was in those days. Let us observe the youthful age of Hosanna’s shouted, in heart and voice, of infants and children who do not doubt the Word of God, but praise the Lord and Savior in trusting God as any child would trust a perfect Father - unconditionally. When we sing “Hosanna,” we sing the same song also sung each time we pray the Communion liturgy as we will today. The words of the *Sanctus* point to this same Jesus, who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, also comes to us in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. How we receive both bread and wine and body and blood at the same time we can’t understand, but Jesus says “This is My body... This is My blood.” And through child like eyes of faith we see much more than just bread and wine, because our ears hear what Jesus has said in giving and assuring us of His forgiveness of sins in this special way also.

We may sing this morning “Hosanna in the Highest!” But we don’t need to wonder “What will this King do?” We look ahead this week in taking the opportunity to thank and praise Jesus for His love for each one of us. Rejoicing in Him for what His pilgrimage to the cross has done for our sins. His death, our life! And so with unspeakable joy in our hearts, yes, thankfully through Jesus Christ our Savior we will be able to **OBSERVE THE AGE OF HOSANNA** to come... our everlasting life with Him. Amen.

*This peace of God, that passes all understanding will guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.*