

April 10, 2022 ~ Palm Sunday

Sermon- Psalms (Palm) Sunday?

Scripture- Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, CTW: Luke 19: 28-40

Hymns- 215, 218, 217, (Responsive reading 216 at the end of the service before we sing 217 as our closing hymn).

Theme: The deliverance of God's people is expressed in Psalm 118 which also expresses beautifully that the nature of God's love is 24/7. God delivered us through Jesus because of His love. The Psalmist tells us that God's love is enduring. What does it mean, and what exactly do we celebrate on Palm Sunday? What would that celebration look like all year long?

I. Expectations Then and Now

A. The parade of palms was a clear understanding on the part of the crowd tying the expectation of the delivering Messiah to Jesus of Nazareth.

They are shouting praise from Psalm 118:26, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" They added "Hosanna!" Which means, "save". This means they are proclaiming, "Jesus, you are the expression of **God's deliverance, Save Us!**"

B. So Wave That Branch 24/7!

You have probably heard the story of a little boy who was sick on Palm Sunday and stayed home from church with his mother. His father returned from church holding a palm branch. The little boy was curious and asked, "Why do you have that palm branch, dad?"

The father answered: "You see, when Jesus came into town, everyone waved Palm Branches to honor him, and so we got Palm Branches today."

The little boy replied, "**Boy, the one Sunday I miss is the Sunday that Jesus shows up!**"

In honor of our celebration today, let us look at the characteristics of God's enduring love:

II. God's enduring love is based upon His unique Character

A. It is based on His unchanging character not our changing whims-God loves because that is who He is.

Young ones hoping for love play the game with flower petals, he loves me, he loves me not...God is never like that. If we played that with God's love toward us it would simply be, he loves me, he loves me, he loves me....

For instance, Peter was so sure of his devotion to Jesus. He was the first one to rise up, leap out, and proclaim for the cause of Jesus.

But Jesus told Peter he wouldn't always be that way. In fact Peter was told he would deny Jesus 3 times. Peter couldn't fathom this. "Never!" He declared... **But he did.**

B. Has anybody ever let you down by not meeting your expectations? Of course! Have you ever been let down repeatedly? Not the kind of sophomoric whims of young friends but the deep betrayal of someone you have invested in, someone who had stood strong with you and made so many promises only to let them fall.

The Bible tells us that Jesus was betrayed by Judas...but I imagine Peter's denial hurt all the same.

Yet Jesus didn't turn his back on Peter. He appeared to him and restored him before His ascension.

Jesus asked Peter, "**Do you love me?**" He was loving Peter and rebuilding that relationship, not because of Peter's actions past, present or future, but because of His love. Today in honor and remembrance of the occasion, know that Jesus is asking us the same question...**DO YOU LOVE ME?**

III. God's enduring love brings Deliverance

A. We have Concern about outcomes. We want to know what is coming...when and how. We are the kind of people that need reassurances. Every single time we tell our spouse or children or friends that we love them, we want them to respond "I LOVE YOU TOO!"

Jesus wants us to be assured by the words of the Bible and His track record of laying His life down for us day after day after day...

B. The Psalmist says, "What can man do to me?" In **Matthew 10:28** Jesus expresses this by proclaiming, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."

The Apostle Paul states in **Philippians 1:18-21** "I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.**"

C. That reminds me of the old story about an elderly missionary returning to the United States to retire. He & his wife had spent over 40 years serving in Africa. But now he was alone. His wife & two children had long since found their final resting place in the soil of Africa. As he got off the plane he saw a great crowd of people waiting at the gate.

Some were holding signs, others were waving banners, & he could even hear sounds of music above the shouting voices. For a few seconds he thought, "Can it be? After more than 40 years of service, all of these people have actually come out to welcome me home?"

But no, that was not the case. On his plane was a politician returning from a visit to Africa. During his visit he had been

catered to & waited upon & all his needs had been met. And now he was being welcomed back with all the ceremony his nation could provide.

As he waited & waited at the airport, the contrast was almost more than the old missionary could bear.

For a moment he began feeling sorry for himself, & he started to pray. "Father in Heaven, why? I've served You faithfully & for so long, & yet, look at what is happening here..."

"I don't expect much. But is it wrong to desire that there be some kind of a welcome home?" Then, almost as if God had spoken out loud, the old missionary heard Him say, "**But my son, you're not home yet!**" --Melvin Newland

D. With God, the outcome of things is never in doubt.

What's the worst that can happen? The outcome for every believer is heaven!

God's love enables me not to worry about the way things will end up. I know he loves me, knows all things and will therefore lead me in the very best path for my benefit and His glory.

E. People always size things up by looking at the odds. We must remember that God is an "overcoming odds kind of God."

1. Gideon overcame the odds.
2. Moses and the children of Israel overcame the odds.
3. Joshua stood outside the walls of Jericho and overcame the odds.
4. Peter stepped out of the boat and overcame the odds!
5. Jesus lay dead in a tomb and overcame the odds!
6. They all overcame the odds because God responded by making a way the odds never took into account.

Whether they were outnumbered, hemmed in, locked out, heavier than water or dead...**God made a way! That's what we celebrate today!**

How about you---what odds are you up against?

1. Is it financial?
2. Is it Relational?
3. Is it Spiritual like breaking a sinful habit or establishing a fruit of the Spirit for your future ministry?
4. Is it Emotional?

Whatever it is today and everyday you should celebrate the love of God which delivers you from it all.

Don't look at why not...expand your view and celebrate God. You may not be able to perceive what He can or will do to deliver you but the God who loves you will in fact deliver...on earth or in heaven...**and that is reason to celebrate!**

IV. Finally, God's enduring love... Deserves Praise!

I pray that is the reason you come to this place. Not just designated Holy Days like today, but any other day as well.

This place exists for the purpose of praising and honoring God and His enduring love for all of us: The Psalmist provides the truth of God's love for us:

a. Salvation (v.1 and 2) Give thanks for His lovingkindness is everlasting!

b. Fellowship (v.19 and 20) Enter the gates and give thanks all you who are righteous!

c. Stability (v.22) The Capstone is Jesus—even if a foundation is solid, a capstone is necessary to keep things from tipping over. He is referred to as the CHIEF Capstone!

Palm Sunday was all about praise for our Deliverer in the form of Jesus Christ who rode down that hill toward Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey in accordance with what had been foretold in Scripture many years before!

In Luke's account of the Triumphal entry Jesus even responds to those who would keep the proclamation of His deliverance quiet, **"If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out!" (I would like to see that...it would have been the introduction of rock music!)**

Ladies and Gentlemen, God deserves our praise...let's not hold back.

What are you up against today? I want to invite you to lift it up! I pray for you that God might help you look to him instead of your circumstances or odds.

I invite you all to pray and sing and celebrate...expressing praise to God for what He means to you.

Amen...let us pray...