

JESUS OF NAZARETH IS PASSING BY

Hosanna to the Son of David

Hear what the children are saying! Understand what they are saying!

Matthew 21:14-17

TEXT: *The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?" And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

"It ain't bragging if you can do it." Do you know to whom that quote is attributed? It goes back to the famous St. Louis Cardinals pitcher, Dizzy Dean, who said that he and his brother Paul, also a pitcher, would win the 1934 season. The Dean brothers won 49 games and the St. Louis Cardinals won the World Series that year. They shut the mouths of their critics and elevated that phrase to popular usage in the sports world. Other champions, like Joe Namath and Muhammed Ali also like to use the boast: It ain't bragging if you can do it.

When Jesus' enemies challenged him for accepting the praise of those who cheered him as he entered the gates of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday he didn't borrow from Dizzy Dean, Joe Namath or Muhammed Ali. He quoted Scripture. He quoted Psalm 8, a Psalm of David: ***O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.*** Burning with hatred they demanded an answer: ***"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?" And he left them...*** In other words, what David wrote about 1000 years earlier did indeed apply to him. This was not "bragging" based on misplaced praise.

Jesus of Nazareth was passing through the gates of the royal city of Jerusalem and the people shouted: Hosanna to the Son of David! "Hosanna" means "save us, please!" "Save us! Now!" And to call Jesus "the Son of David" was a name to be reserved for the Messiah of God, the Christ, God's Anointed One, chosen from eternity to be the Savior of all mankind. ***Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus...*** and today we are gathered together here because we would answer the same as Jesus: YES! But with our "yes" would be the admonition: I. Hear what the children are saying! II. Understand what they are saying!

Do you hear what these children are saying? What is it about children that would make our Lord use them to, as He says, "ordain praise?" Scripture reveals a fact that already contradicts human reason. As David writes: ***Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*** Ps 51 While many deny this revealed fact, and while even you and I will forget this if we are not reminded of it, all humanity is conceived in sin and born with a totally corrupt sinful nature. That means that it is our nature to hate God, despise His Word, and are blind to His truth. It is by God gracious election and calling by the power of His Holy Spirit through the Gospel, especially

through the miracle of Holy Baptism that infants are reborn and made spiritually alive. That is why Christian infants and little children are so pure, not in their goodness, but in their confession of faith.

Saving faith that is created by the power of the Holy Spirit has three basic entities: knowledge, trust and conviction. It's like a living human body. A living body has a beating heart, breathing lungs and a brain that works. Without any one of these things, the human body is dead. Without knowledge, trust and conviction there is no spiritual life, no faith. At baptism, the Holy Spirit creates saving faith, which is composed of these three things: knowledge, trust and conviction. So when a little child sings, "Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so..." it is a beautiful expression of what the Holy Spirit worked in his heart already at his baptism.

Is there any wonder why Jesus once gave this serious warning: *Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.* Lu 18 Another time he warned: *If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!* Mt 18 It's not just the druggies and abortionists and homosexuals who are the danger, it's the parents of children who do not bring them to Jesus and prayerfully work to keep them with Jesus! It's those ignorant people who believe that if they let their children pick and choose what they want to believe about God who have turned them over to Satan to do what Jesus tells parents to do: *Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them...* Lu 18 It's those parents who bring them to Jesus in Holy Baptism but then never bring them back again to the house of the Lord or teach and discipline them to worship Jesus. They will have to answer to God when that pure and godly praise of Jesus turns into a whisper and then disappears, as they grow older.

What those ancient little Christians were declaring was the pure truth, and how precious it was to our Lord Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem to suffer and die for their sins! How it angered him to hear the religious leaders of the Jews commanding him to silence their songs of praise! Yes, we hear what the children are singing. Do we understand what they are saying?

Something happens from the time of infants and children to when they mature and become "students." They mature from childhood toward adulthood, they discover the gift of reason. But because they still have the sinful nature, their Old Adam takes great pride in this gift from God. Instead of thanking God for this gift of reason and using it to glorify Him, they learn to use it over and against faith. They begin to imagine that they know more than their parents. They begin to imagine that they know more than their parents and that their parents are tyrants. You can tell that they are entering this stage of development when they say things like, "I hate you Mom!" or, "I'm going to run away." By the time they enter the universities of this world and they are away from home, their reason is ready to taste of worldly wisdom with no regard to matters of faith. Why else do young adults do what they do on what is known in American culture as "Spring Break?"

And yet there is this strange infatuation with those who are students of universities and institutions of higher education as if they are the intelligent ones in this world. I went through 9 years of college and post-graduate studies and I know from experience that the greatest part of being educated is to go out into the real world knowing that you still have so much to learn!

On Palm Sunday, it was the religious leaders and university-trained Pharisees who were ignorant about what the children were singing. The Bible says: ***But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?"*** They were indignant about what they were hearing because they were ignorant about what this all meant. They did not deny the miracles Jesus had been doing, but they remained fearful of losing the advantages of their position and power in this life. Now truly ignorant is that!

May no one among us, no matter how intelligent and educated we are fail to understand what the songs of these children were about! ***Hosanna to the Son of David!*** This is the very same prayer that the criminal on the cross next to Jesus prayed, but with different words. He prayed: ***Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!*** "Jesus" means Saviour as the angel told Joseph when Jesus was born: ***You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.*** Mt 1 He believed that Jesus was indeed the King of the Jews: ***remember me when you come into your kingdom!*** Or, "Take me to heaven!" We all cherish that blessed response of our dying Savior and King: ***Today you will be with me in paradise!*** Lu 23 Hosanna means "Save us NOW! Save us, PLEASE! This is the most important prayer, based on the most important piece of knowledge and information any human being can know!

Do not be deceived by the simplicity of our salvation based on all that God has done for us in Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose was sacrificed for the sins of the world. The religious leaders of the Jews were too sophisticated and too smart to think that all their power and wealth wouldn't at least win God's favor. We too are living in a time and place surrounded by those who think kids are cute, but do not understand what they are saying, even when they sing, "Jesus loves me..." They hear the words, but do not understand that "Jesus loves me, this I know, FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO!" That same Bible that condemns us in our sins makes them despise that sacred Book. So they do not know or believe in that Bible that also shows them the Savior from sin.

And for us who are Christian parents and grandparents, we must not forget that what the Holy Spirit has begun in the hearts of our little children already at their baptism can be lost if we do not keep bringing them to Jesus in worship and Bible study. We dare not let the world instruct them without our faithful instruction in God's Word to keep them in the one true faith. No one knows for certain, but it's very likely that many who praised Jesus as the Messiah on Palm Sunday may have been influenced to join their religious leaders who called for his crucifixion on Good Friday. It's sad to say that this still goes on among us today. Little children who know their Lord are allowed to be educated by this world without the one thing that is needed for life and salvation: God's Word and the faithful worship of His saving name.

Do you hear what the children are saying about Jesus? May none of us at any age ever forget what it means to pray: ***Hosanna to the Son of David!*** Amen.