

Jesus! Hosanna! Our English language doesn't quite catch it. To us, the name *Jesus* and the Hebrew word *Hosanna* sound completely unrelated, but in their original language, they are a perfect match.

When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would be the mother of God's Son, his name had already been picked out: **“You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”** “You will call him *Yeshua*,” ... literally **“the Lord saves.”**

33 years later, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, shouts of **“Hosanna!”** filled the air. *Hoshianna* ... literally **“save us now”** is from the very same root as *Yeshua*.

They shouted: **“Hosanna!”** Without even knowing it, the Palm Sunday people perfectly explained what Jesus came here to do: **“Save us now!”** as he rode into Jerusalem.

Today, the Christian Church around the world begins Holy Week. How many has it been for you? **“Hosanna!”** is a great word to begin this week. **“Save us now!”** We've already spoken, sung and heard it: **1) It's a shout to a king. 2) It's a motto for a kingdom.**

- 1 -

It was a Sunday in early spring, when Jesus and his disciples left Bethany, a village about 3 miles from the temple. His good friends Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived there.

He's going to Jerusalem, which means *“house of peace.”* Which is ironic. By the end of this week, this *“house of peace”* would become a house of horrors for this prophet from Nazareth. The hatred and violence wouldn't stop until he was captured, tortured and executed.

That's what Jesus was looking at. No matter how joyful the procession was that day, the end of this Palm Sunday road was anything but peaceful.

Jesus knew it. But his disciples and the enthusiastic crowd didn't. They were caught up in the excitement of the moment. Their heads were filled with happy and patriotic thoughts of the Passover celebration in the Holy City. It was a special time for them.

And the words they were singing: **“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”** comes from one of the Psalms that recalled the very first Passover and the miraculous deliverance God provided from Egypt. Could anything be more uplifting and inspiring?

That's what makes this so sad. By the end of the week, the crowd's mood will have completely changed. By the end of the week, the disciples will have abandoned Jesus to face his enemies alone and to die alone. The sad reality is most in the crowd shouted: **“Hosanna!”** with their voices, but not with their hearts of faith.

Sound familiar? There's so much talk about *“faith”* today. Everyone claims to have *“faith.”* But what is *“faith”*? And what does it mean to be *“religious”*? And how do you define *“spiritual”*? Today's attitude is that **“I”** get to define what my faith is. **“I”** get to decide my personal beliefs and how **“I”** express them in worship or how **“I”** live.

That kind of thinking affects God's people too. Right here in the gospel that cheering crowd had *“faith,”* but as the week passed it was really more of a habit, a custom, a tradition. Faith for them was shouting AT the King, not shouting TO their King.

The real problem is that people today don't see that faith needs an object. It's not just a *“feeling”* or a *“positive vibe.”* You don't just *“have faith.”* You need to have faith IN something or someone.

By God's grace, the Spirit has led you and me to put our faith in Christ. We believe in Jesus — who he is and what he did. We need to keep that mind that

so our faith doesn't become the faith of the Palm Sunday crowd. Holy Week is a good time to remind ourselves of that too with all our special services at church.

We can't come to our Good Friday service just because we really like the Tenebrae service of darkness and the loud noise at the end of the service. We must stand at the foot of the cross with that combination of awe and joy that God chose to do this for us.

We can't come to Easter worship just because we should at least go to church on Easter, or because we love to see the Easter lilies and smell the Easter breakfast. We must stand at the open tomb to understand the power of Christ's resurrection.

We can't come shouting "Hosanna" AT a king. We must stand in true faith shouting our "Hosanna" TO the King. There's a difference.

- Shouting our "Hosanna" TO the King means confessing he's your only hope of salvation and that without him you're eternally lost.
- Shouting our "Hosanna" TO the King means confessing your sins and giving up any hope of saving yourself with your good behavior.
- It means pleading, **"Save me now! There's no other way!"**

And those who, by God's grace, shout in faith to the King are heard by him. In David's day, in every day, God answered his people's shout for help. He answers us when we shout: **"Hosanna - save us now!"**

On the cross hangs the only answer for our sin problem crowned with thorns. On a heavenly throne sits the only answer for all our problems crowned with glory and honor. His answer: *"I am your living and reigning King,"* time after time.

- 2 -

"Hosanna!" is a shout to the King! It's also a motto for His kingdom. Our lesson records the song the crowd sang: **"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"**

Nations choose mottoes to identify who they are

and what they stand for. America's motto: *E pluribus unum* (Out of many, one), reflects who we are and what we stand for. America is the great melting pot.

"Hosanna!" is a fitting motto for the kingdom of Christ. **"Save us now!"** Christ's kingdom is all about one thing: Salvation eternal rescue from the sin's slavery eternal life in indescribable joy eternal relaxation for our souls. This is the goal of our faith. This is the reason he is King and the reason he brought us into his kingdom.

But who understood that on Palm Sunday or the rest of Holy Week? The crowd didn't. They thought Jesus had come to make Israel as great as it had been under David. Jesus would drive out the Romans. He would heal their diseases. He would multiply 5 loaves and 2 fish every day. He would bring earthly peace and prosperity.

But Jesus would tell Pontius Pilate later that week, **"My kingdom is from another place."** No, his kingdom is about eternal salvation, not national prosperity. His kingdom wasn't about winning against Rome. It was all about winning souls for heaven.

And we, as members of the kingdom, want that to be our focus. Christ has called us to preach **"the good news of the kingdom"** — that salvation is free and already won by him. Anyone who believes will inherit an eternal kingdom in heaven. That's a wonderful and powerful motto to preach and teach. It's a motto that gives hope, joy and peace to a world in desperate need of them.

Today we're shouting our **"Hosanna!"** It's a good motto for Holy Week. **"Hoshianna! Save us now!"** That's what *Yeshua* rides to do. That's what the cross assures us he did do. That's what the empty Easter tomb guarantees he will come back to do.

"Save us now!" That's what the King is all about. That's what His kingdom is all about!