

## **Matthew 21:12-17 Do You Hear What These Children Are Saying? Palm Sun/ Confirmation 3/20/16**

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Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, whom we praise as our Savior! Amen.  
The Word of God for this Palm Sunday is written in Matthew 21:12-17

These are Your Words heavenly Father. Make us holy through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear Children of God, in Christ,

Have you ever had it happen that you were so rushed to get a meal on the table, to sit down and eat, that you forgot something? Then, your little child says, "Aren't we going to pray?" As Christian parents, we teach our children to pray, but sometimes they need to remind us! During our Lenten season on Wednesdays we've been describing the ironies of the passion. An irony is an outcome that you don't expect. You don't expect a young child to tell a parent to pray to the Lord. We just sang, "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna!" about the children singing. This morning, we'll think about why Jesus' enemies asked Him,

### **Do you hear what these children are saying?**

**God wants all people to understand the wonderful things of Jesus!** Matthew wrote, "*The chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things [Jesus] did.*" (v.15) The word for *wonderful* that Matthew used, means something that causes people to be amazed. Jesus did things that caused people's mouths to drop open in surprise and it led people to praise Him.

What had Jesus done that was so wonderful? On Palm Sunday, He rode into Jerusalem causing great excitement. But 3 things happened on the next day. 1. Jesus went to the temple courtyards and found money changers and merchants. It was Passover week and God's law required every Jewish adult male to come to Jerusalem for the festival. Jews came from all over the Roman world. They couldn't travel with animals, so they bought their sacrifices at Jerusalem. The priests insisted on being paid in Jewish coins rather than Roman. It allowed them to make money with the exchange rates. Also, in the temple complex where the Gentiles worshipped, it had become a market instead of a place for prayer. Jesus drove out the money changers and those selling animals and He called them thieves who were using the temple as den or a hideout to cover their sinful actions. The people were amazed at Jesus' words and actions.

Matthew writes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> wonder: "*The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them.*" (v.14) Jesus had healed people for three years. His healing was usually in distant regions. Now, He did miracles in the temple courts before 1,000's of worshipers who had come from many nations. And there was a 3<sup>rd</sup> wonder. The works of Jesus affected the children. They were shouting in the temple courts, "*Hosanna to the Son of David!*" (v.15) These uninhibited children must have been part of the happy crowd from the day before. They were still singing His praises the next day. These three wonderful things gave the same message: Jesus was the Christ, the promised Savior that they had been waiting for!

The children called Jesus "the Son of David," which was the title of the Savior King. The sad irony lay with the leaders. It states, "When [they] saw the wonderful things [Jesus] did and the children shouting in the temple courts . . . , they were indignant." (v.15) They were filled with anger. These men were the experts. They spent their life studying the Bible. How dare these children offer praises to Jesus, whom they thought was an imposter. The leaders were blinded by unbelief. The children by faith knew the Savior better than them. It's no different today. Many intellectuals mock people who believe in God. In the Christian church too many pastors and professors don't believe in Jesus as He is revealed in the Bible. They don't believe that God's Son came in the flesh to live a holy life. They don't accept the truth that He died and rose from death to give eternal life to all who believe. God sets all these truths before them but they don't believe it.

People today will believe almost anything. They'll believe that in a past life, they were a king or queen or maybe an animal. They'll believe that aliens made life on earth long ago. But they refuse to believe in God who created the world in 6 days. They reject that God offered His Son who shed His blood as a sacrifice to pay for all sins! To accept it would mean that God sets standard of right and wrong. People want think that right and wrong is whatever works best for them. They don't want to admit that they are sinners.

Yet thankfully, there are some people, like the children, who know that they need a Savior. They know the only answer for their guilt and for the pain that sin causes is Jesus. Humble Christians have no problem saying, "We have rebelled against God and deserve to be punished. But Jesus came to save us." He was willing to be crucified and to be abandoned by God while on the cross. He knew that His death was the only way to erase our sin. So He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The next day He cleansed his Father's house, healed the sick, and inspired the children to shout their song of praise. To this day, God leads Christians to know Jesus and trust that He has given them eternal life. That's what the children sang!

**Second, God wants us to join in their song of praise!** When the Jewish leaders asked Jesus "*Do you hear what these children are saying?*" they were confronting Him. They were horrified that children would call Jesus the Messiah. But, they failed to understand God's plan. Jesus replied, "*Have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?'*" (v.17) Jesus not only heard what the children were singing, He approved of it. You hear political ads and you wonder who is saying these things? Then you hear a candidate at the end say, I approve this message!

Jesus not only approved the praise of the children, so did God! Jesus quoted Psalm 8 which is all about how God's Son would set aside His glory and live as a humble man to be the Savior. In that Psalm, God taught His people that He valued children's praises and that their praise silenced the enemies. Jewish people knew that Psalm 8 was a prophecy about the Savior. When Jesus quoted it, it silenced the leaders. The children won! Earlier, Jesus had taught them that only those who have the faith of a child would see the kingdom of God. Now He reminded them that a child-like faith is what God wants for all His people.

Going back to the young child reminding the parent and at the dinner table: it's God who taught the children. Through their baptisms and the gospel they hear in church, school, Sunday school, at home, God reaches their hearts and fills them with faith to take God at His Word. Adults often limit their faith by using reason. We assume: "God doesn't get involved in something trivial." But when children learn that God answers all their prayers, they pray about anything. Just listen to a young child pray at bedtime and you'll hear prayers that amaze you. The children can teach us a lesson not to limit God's power in anything.

Where can adults get faith like little children? Faith comes from the message of Jesus. The saving gospel comes to us in God's Word and in the Sacraments. Jesus died and rose so God completely accepts believers as His children. Every promise in God's Word helps us. The psalmist wrote, "*My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.*" (Psalm 121:2) So, God strengthens our faith to praise Him!

We praise God when we trust in Him. We praise God when we pray to Him and when we confess Him as our Savior. We praise God as we serve Him at church, at home or anywhere. In all things, Jesus is the source of our praise. In a few moments, the confirmands will confess their faith in Christ. Do we hear what the children are saying? Let us join them to praise Jesus, our Savior. Amen.