

PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 2021

Palm Sunday is a strange mixture of praise and suffering. We go from Hosanna's to Crucify him in the space of an hour. But isn't that what life is like too. One minute everything seems to be going well and the next all hell has broken loose. One minute we're patting ourselves on the back and the next we are looking for someone to blame for the sudden change in our fortunes.

When the crowds surrounded Jesus as he entered Jerusalem they shouted Hosanna which literally translated means save us now. They wanted Jesus to save them from Roman rule. They expected a revolution and when that didn't occur, they quickly turned against him. They wanted Jesus to be who they wanted him to be. So, the question this morning is, who is Jesus for you in your life and how do you relate to him?

A classroom of seventh graders at a parochial school were asked what does Jesus save you from? One student replied, "Jesus saves people from hell." The priest that had asked the question felt it was the kind of answer that the class expected he wanted to hear instead of being an answer that had any real connection to their lives.

So, he pressed them further. He said, "Let me put it this way, if God or Jesus was here right now, what would God save you from?" One of the students raised her hand and said, "Death." Another offered that Jesus could really help him out by saving him from an upcoming math test. Then one of the seventh graders said, "Pressure." And another one said, "My parents' expectations." Then another, shy student, almost in a whisper said, "Fear. I want God to save me from my fears." All of these answers struck the priest as being more sincere than "hell," although, he added that you could argue their comments gave a pretty clear picture of what "hell" looks like to a 7th grader.

So, if we posed the same question to us adults and look deep into our souls and be honest as these students were, what would we say? When we wave our palms and boldly cry out, 'Hosanna,' do we dare imagine what we really want God in Jesus to save us from? Save me from anger. Save me from cancer. Save me from depression. Save me from debt. Save me from the conflict in my family. Save me from boredom. Save me from addiction. Save me from the endless cycle of violence. Save me from humiliation. Save me from staring at the ceiling at three a.m. wondering why I exist. Save me from bitterness. Save me from arrogance. Save me from loneliness. Save me, God, save me from my fears."

Whatever we may hope God will save us from, Palm Sunday serves to remind us that Jesus has the power to bring us that salvation because he upended everyone's expectations of him. The cross is the great equalizer. He can calm our fears, sustain us in our pain and transform our lives in ways that are far better than we can imagine. Is this the Jesus you want in your life? If it is then blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Save us now! Hosanna! Amen.