

Sermon Notes

Psalm 118:24-26

“Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Palm Sunday – An Easter Sermon Series

April 14, 2019

Introduction & Background

- 1) Today is Palm Sunday, which begins “Holy Week” in the liturgical calendar.
 - a) The week we remember the Lord Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection.
 - b) **Palm Sunday**: Christ's royal entry into His capitol city; Jerusalem.
 - c) **Maundy Thursday**: Christ's Last Supper, right before His arrest.
 - d) **Good Friday**: The day Christ was crucified.
 - e) **Easter** (Passover): The day Christ resurrected from the dead.
- 2) To better understand these holidays we are looking at Psalm 118.
 - a) Psalms 113-118 are viewed by ancient Jews as a special collection of praise songs.¹
 - i) They were used at the great annual Old Testament festivals, especially the joyous ones of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.²
 - ii) During the Passover, the gathering would sing Psalms 113-114 before the meal, and Psalms 115-118 after the meal.
 - b) So this is probably part of the song sung by Christ and His apostles right after they celebrated the Passover on that first Maundy Thursday.

“After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” – Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26
 - c) *“The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone.”* – Ps 118:22
 - i) This of course refers to Christ and His death (rejected by the world) and His resurrection (the foundation of all God's work of salvation).
 - ii) See: Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1Pet 2:7.
 - d) In today's text, Ps 118:26a, we read *“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.”*
 - i) This verse was directly proclaimed by the people as Christ entered Jerusalem during that first Palm Sunday. Matt 21:9; Mark 11:9;
Luke 19:38; John 12:13
 - ii) As we read in Matthew 21:9 – *“The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!’”*

¹ They are called “Egyptian Hallel” psalms because of Ps 114:1. “Hallel” is the Hebrew word meaning “to praise.” It’s the name given to several collections of psalms of praise used during worship at the Temple and the synagogue. Besides the “Egyptian Hallel” of Ps 113-118, there is the “Great Hallel” of Psalms 120-136, especially Ps 136, and the “Final Hallel” or “Hallelujah Psalms” of 146-150.

² There are three great pilgrim holidays in the OT: Passover, Pentecost & Tabernacles.

Passover (or Pesah, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread) celebrates the exodus out of Egypt in March or April.

(Ex 12:3-20; Lev 23:6; Deut 16:1-8)

Pentecost (or Shabuot, or Feast of Weeks, or Day of Firstfruits, or Feast of Harvest) celebrates the completion of the barley harvest in May or June. (Ex 23:16; 34:22; Num 28:26; Lev 23:16)

Tabernacles, the Feast of (or Sukkot, or the Feast of Booths, or the Feast of Ingathering) celebrates the end of the year and happens in September or October. (Lev 23:34; Num 29:12-38)

Though there are many other minor feast days, the other major holiday is **Yom Kippur**, the Day of Atonement, which was a holy convocation where Israel made offerings for their sins in September or October. (Ex 30:10; Lev 23:26-31).

- iii) This is a rare reference, where all four Gospels quote a single text.
- 3) Psalm 118 is a hymn of thanksgiving to God for the victory He has given His people against their enemies.
- a) Verses 1-4 are a call for all of God's people to process to God's Temple in the capitol city of Jerusalem to give thanks to the Lord.
 - i) Including God's people ("Israel"), the priests ("house of Aaron") and the "God-fearers," those non-Jews who worship the Lord.
 - ii) The OT Temple was that very special building, in the capitol city of Jerusalem, where God dwelt in a unique and special way. 1Chr 22:1-19
 - b) Verses 5-18 are the report of how God has saved His people from all their surrounding enemies.
 - c) Verses 19-29, the texts we are focusing on, are a liturgy (i.e. order of worship) of the people approaching and entering into the Temple complex to worship.

Old Testament Meaning of Psalm 118:24-26

- 1) Our sermon text today begins with a famous verse: *"This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it."* Ps 118:24
- a) Here the people have entered the Temple complex to worship and praise God for the deliverance the Almighty has given from their enemies.
 - b) The "day" is obviously this time of joyous worship and praise.
 - i) God has caused this day because of the deliverance He has given.
 - ii) God has also made this day because it's only by His grace, given by His Spirit, that anyone turns, believes, trusts, and rejoices in the Lord.
 - c) What a blessing it is to rejoice in what God has done and be glad in it! This brings great contentment. 2Cor 9:8; Phil 4:11;
1Tim 6:6; Heb 13:5
- 2) Though safe in the Temple, the righteous acknowledge their continued need for the Lord and His deliverance and cry out, *"O LORD, do save, we beseech You."* Ps 138:8
- a) This is a constant prayer of the people of God: Josh 10:6; 22:22; 1Sam 7:8; 2Sam 19:9; 1Chr 16:35-36; Ps 44:7; 80:2; 106:47-48; Is 25:9; 33:21-22; Jer 2:27; 51:45; Matt 1:21; 8:25; 2Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5
 - b) We need constant salvation from the world, sin, our selfishness, and Satan.
 - c) God only can save because of who He is.
 - i) Yes, He is the only powerful God, but He saves because He is good.
 - ii) As Ps 118 begins and ends: Ps 118:1,29
"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good."
 - iii) Not that we deserve mercy, because we are wicked and fallen. Matt 7:11; Rom 1:18ff;
Eph 2:1-3; Col 2:13
 - iv) Goodness only exists because God's very nature is good. Num 23:19; 2Tim 2:13;
Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18
 - Thus God cannot deny Himself or change.
 - Thus stealing is wrong, because God is not a thief. Ex 20:15

- v) Because of God's nature He will bring justice; He decides what is right and wrong and He alone governs all.
- vi) As Isaiah simply puts it, *"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us."* - Is 33:22
- d) The people also ask for their well-being: *"O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!"* - Ps 138:8b Josh 1:8; 2Chr 26:5;
Ps 1:3; 122:6-7
- i) Here, unfortunately, we have to be very careful today.
- ii) There is nothing wrong with praying that our lives be in "good condition." (That we be healthy, safe, receive our daily bread, etc.)
- iii) However, the modern "Health, Wealth & Prosperity" Gospel is heresy.
- It's the belief the main purpose of the Gospel is to make you worldly successful.
 - You do this by faith. If you really trust in God He will give you money, a new car, women, etc.
 - The main way you "trust" in God is giving the false preacher more money.
 - This is a wicked heresy, but also false prophets. 2Tim 3:2-5
(Like Benny Hinn, Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, etc.)
 - It destroys faith, because all things are from the Lord.
 - Times of testing are used by the Lord to grow our faith.
 - Remember the words of Job, *"Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?"* - Job 2:10b
 - And, *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."* - Job 1:21b
 - To humbly and boldly ask for enough provision for the day is the best.
 - As we pray in the Lord's Prayer, *"Give us this day our daily bread."* - Matt 6:11
 - For all godly prayers end with that faith of *"yet not My will, but Yours be done."* - Luke 22:42b
- 3) The priests who officiate the thanksgiving offering at the Temple, those who act as the intercessors (or go-between) between God and the people, speak God's blessing by proclaiming, *"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD."* - Ps 118:26
- a) So the one (singular) who comes *"in the name of the LORD"* is blessed.
- b) This is anyone who *"fears the LORD"* from Ps 118:4.
- i) When *"LORD"* is in all capitols this is the name of God.
- ii) It means "I Am," the name God gave to Moses. Ex 3:13-14
- iii) So this isn't some generic god of our imagination, but the God of the Bible.
- iv) The person who fears the LORD especially keeps the first four of the Ten Commandments: Ex 20:2-12
- The only God he or she has is the LORD, the God of the Bible.
 - That person has no other thing or person (including themselves) above God. Thus avoids idolatry.

- When the Godfearer speaks about God he or she only says things God has actually said in His Scriptures, lest they take God's name in vain.
 - Their rest and hope is only in the LORD and the correct (i.e. biblical) worship of Him.
- v) If you do not do these things you are not blessed by God, but under His curse.
- c) However, for the righteous God-fearers, the priests of God proclaim,
"We have blessed you from the house of the LORD." - Ps 118:26b
- i) The "you" here is plural, referring to all the people.
 - ii) They are blessed because their worship is acceptable unto the LORD, which is no small thing to please the Holy Creator & Judge of the universe.
 - iii) God has redeemed His people, and will continue to do so!

New Testament Meaning of Psalm 118:24-26

- 1) We read in the New Testament, the Blessed One "*who comes in the name of the Lord*" is not only the person reading the Psalm, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, because all Scripture is about Him. Luke 24:25-27;
John 6:39-47;
Rev 1:8; 22:13
- 2) The Lord Jesus states this is a prophecy about Himself. Matt 23:39; Luke 13:35
- 3) It is about His Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. Matt 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-14; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19
 - a) As per OT prophecy, the Messiah (the Anointed One, the "Christ" in Greek), the Great King from the royal line of David has returned to His capitol. Is 52:13-53:12
Matt 1:1ff
 - b) "The Day of the Lord" (when God acts) has come: He has sent the Savior, who has defeated death on the cross. Rom 3:20ff; Gal 3:13-14
Eph 2:4-8; Titus 3:3-8
 - c) Yes, the Lord Jesus will return at the end of the age, but God's redemption of His people HAS been accomplished. Matt 25:31-46
Heb 1:1ff
 - d) Talk about something to rejoice and be glad in!
- 4) Yes, we still need to ask "do save, we beseech You" and "do send prosperity."
 - a) One of the great mistakes modern Evangelicals make is to view salvation as an instantaneous decision. (Ex: "Are you saved?")
 - i) Justification (being declared righteous by the blood of Christ) and adoption does instantaneously happen one when repents and believes in Christ.
 - ii) However, "salvation" is the whole process, including sanctification, that daily remaining faithful in Christ by dying to sin and living for Him. 2Cor 7:10; Phil 2:12-13;
1Thes 5:8-9; 1Tim 4:16;
1Pet 1:5-10; 2:2; 2Pet 3:15
 - b) This is why we go to church, Christ's spiritual body on earth, the Temple, where the Holy Spirit dwells in a special way. Rom 8:9; 1Cor 3:16; 6:19;
2Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21;
Heb 12:22-24; Rev 3:21
 - i) First, to worship, because it is commanded and how can we not! It gives rest in Christ. Ex 20:8; Heb 10:25
Heb 4:1ff
 - ii) Second, it is where we are fed the Gospel, through biblical preaching and the sacraments, which is more than a blessing, it is the very power of God. Matt 26:26ff
Rom 1:15-17