**March 24th 2024 Palm Sunday**

**Text: Mark 11:1-10** 0713

**Theme: Save Now, O Lord.**

May the Lord God grant that we receive and understand the importance of this day and of the season we are in, and may He remind us of the reason we gather here and commune with one another. Amen. Dear friends in Christ: I thank the Lord God for the season of Lent, for it helps to put into perspective the insignificance of our lives, and the insignificance of all those little things that tend to disunite rather than make for peace. When we witness the sacrificial life of Christ, Him suffering poverty and contempt, Him suffering and dying under the hand of the Jews, the abuse, the scorn, the spite, and we learn that He did it willingly for our sakes, what do all those little things mean in the end? Can we look at the what things He endured for us, and not desire to do that for one another? Today we have come to what is referred to as holy week, or passion week. Starting today was the final week of our Savior’s life, and it began in a glorious way. Today is Palm Sunday, and on this day, of all days, we must come together and heal. Our congregation has, to a great extent been torn apart, like unto the prey of a lion. Satan has done a good deal of damage to us, and as any abused victim, we are in rough shape. Yet, we have been warned of this; Scripture has warned us, I have warned many times over in sermons. We hear Peter say: *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Pet. 5:8)* The devil has sunk his teeth and his claws into us. And lest we think that he is done, and has turned his attention elsewhere, I assure you that he is still very much at work here. He will use anything and everything to drive a wedge between us, to tear us apart, to destroy the faith that resides in our hearts, for if we are separated from one another we are much easier victims. However, we have very powerful tools in our fight against him; pray for one another. Pray for each other. I implore everyone here, pray for each other; look to your Savior and see the love demonstrated from Him to you during His life and passion and see there the example He leaves us of how we should love one another. Let those little things that Satan is using to separate us and let them go. Release those who may have offended you, release them. These things are for the most part simply differences of opinion. We have to understand about forgiveness, and that forgiveness is not just to be from God to us, but from each of us to one another. Further forgiveness is not just for the one being forgiven, but for those who are forgiving, because it releases your own heart from holding grudges or ill will against your brother or sister in Christ, or any other person for that matter.

It is with the condition of our congregation in mind that we turn to our text for today bearing in mind the time of year we are in, and the love shown to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He was willing to go into the shameful death of the cross for us, and this love is demonstrated to us by what He did, willingly, on Palm Sunday. Let us then look to our Savior and there find an example of love and sacrifice for others by Jesus Christ. Let us see the glory and the grace of Christ, and of being a follower of Christ, His Christians, and children of our Father in heaven. With these things in mind, and with our hearts open to receive the Gospel of our Savior let us look at our text for today which is found in the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to Mark beginning at verse one.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O most gracious and glorious Savior, we confess to Thee that we are in trouble, our adversary is hard at work within our congregation, and we implore Thee to defend us, guard us and protect us; save now, O Lord, Thy people. Show unto us Christian love, show us how to love, teach us of sacrifice, help us to learn of Thy Gospel, and the glory of forgiveness and eternal salvation. As we look unto Thee riding unto Thy death let us lay down palm branches before Thee, and laying our garments in Thy path, doing so by loving Thee with our whole heart, and loving our fellow Christians and our fellow men. O Lord, we sing unto Thee Hosannas, bless ed art Thou who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest. We implore Thee, O Savior, to come quickly in judgment and take us all to heaven, where being found in the Church Triumphant we shall dwell together in peace and harmony evermore. Help us until then to put aside our own pride, our own sinful flesh, and to live here in the hope and grace of the Gospel, finding unity in the true Gospel, and peace in our congregation. Grant all these things, O Lord, for Thine own name’s sake. Amen.

Guided then by the Spirit of God let us learn of the cry to Save now, O Lord, seeing first that He was:

1. **Riding into death.** We read verses one through ten of our text: **read verses here.** Our text begins with our Savior giving instruction to His disciples to go and find a donkey in a certain place and bring it back to Jesus. We want to notice first and foremost that Jesus had already talked extensively about the fact that He was going to be killed by the Jews, and that this was to happen soon. Here it is less than a week away, and yet we here witness Him giving instruction to His disciples to make arrangements to ride into Jerusalem for the specific reason of going into death. He knew that He would be arrested tortured, condemned and killed and yet He went willingly even making the arrangements for His transport into the city. It is truly incredible to see, and yet we very often don’t give it a second thought. We go about in this world, and in our dealings with others, and forgetting about how Christ lived and died sacrificially for us, we do just the opposite to our fellow men, and even our fellow Christians. We expect that all would do everything in sacrifice to us, and to make us comfortable, to make sure that we have our way without question. IS this the sacrificial spirit which was found in our Savior on that day? Is it the sacrificial spirit which all Christians should exhibit, being followers of Christ? No it is not. Paul said: *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed of one another. This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (Gal. 5:13-17)* As we know all Scripture is written for all people of all time, not just, in this case, for the Galatians. These words then teach us that though we are free by the blood of Christ, we are not free to do as we please.

Having seen Jesus and the willingness to go into death, it is also necessary to view the actions of the crowd who was there. They, recognizing in Jesus to be the very Messiah who was to come, they cry out in praise and worship to Him, shouting Hosannas to Him as He rides. Hosanna means, ‘save now’, and is spoken because those people knew Him to be their Savior. They lay their garments in His path, and palm branches down, like a red carpet welcoming Him into Jerusalem, to save them as they had asked. This is also a good example to us, for we come into this house to praise His name, to worship our God who saved us, and we should see the zeal and fervor they had for their praise. They were not deterred by His appearance or by His the donkey that He rode, or by the pharisees who told Jesus to tell them to stop. They continued on with feeling, with zeal and hope. Here then we have seen the declaration for Jesus to save now, riding to His death. Let us now see secondly that He did so:

1. **To give life.** We read verses one through ten of our text: **read verses here.** What was the reason that Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and ultimately to His own death, yea the death of the shameful cross? It was to give life to those who were dead in trespasses and sins. We hear: *“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” (Col. 2:13-14)* Jesus rode into Jerusalem to give life unto your soul and my soul. He rode in to grant forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation to each one of us. Do we forget this as we go about our lives? Do we forget that Solomon declared that all is vanity and vexation of spirit in this life? Now think to yourself also that the very same people that here on Palm Sunday cried out in praise and exultation of their King and Savior, only six days later cried for His blood and for Him to be crucified. They were zealous for worship when it was popular among the people, but were zealous for blood when it was popular. Now we have been viewing the Blood of the New Testament during our midweek Lenten services, and speaking only for myself, the blood shed at different stages of Jesus’ passion and deathtaught me a great deal, and I have been brought, by the Holy Spirit, to a new understanding of just what exactly Jesus has done for our salvation. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. Should we not also be humble toward God and one another? Do we imagine that God owes us something? Do we imagine that we are somehow more worthy of glorification the Lord and Savior, the Son of God Himself? I say, no, in no way. I don’t believe that anyone here actually thinks that, but doesn’t viewing our Lord’s humility and willing death in sacrifice for us put things into perspective for us? It shows to us what things are truly important, which is what things Jesus Christ has done to rescue us from sin and death.

I want to take this moment, with the Spirit leading us to say to each of us, and I say this also to myself, it is time for us to start again, to renew the joy that the Gospel grants unto all who believe, to care for one another, not just in word, but in deed also. Let us sincerely care for each other so that the devil doesn’t come and take away the truth out of our hearts. Let us pray for another, and exhort one another to godliness and to humble ourselves before the Lord, knowing that He will exalt us in due time, in the glory of heaven itself. Let us remember each other knowing that the souls sitting next to you, behind, and in front of you have been purchased by Christ and are His. They are His servants, and He is our Lord. Let us not forget these things. Let us not quarrel with one another, but knowing that the Day of Judgment approaches, let us hold fast to the love for the Gospel and for each other. Stay strong, do not give up, do not despair, but remember that the Lord has saved us, all of us. May He come again soon to take all of us home. Amen.