

Prayer of Preparation: *Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and put a new and right spirit within me. Then our lips will open, and our mouths will declare praise. Amen.*

It’s Holy Week, the busiest time of the Christian year. Holy Week has all the ups and downs we can imagine, all the ups and downs as Jesus begins the last leg of his journey to the cross...and to resurrection.

Today’s sermon is titled, “*Marching Orders*” and the two readings are Psalm 118 and Matthew 21, Jesus’ entering Jerusalem. But before Jesus goes through the city gates, he does something...he give’s the disciples some directions; he gives them their marching orders. If you were ever in the military you’ll recognize the directions as orders: go here, say this, do that. Jesus was telling the disciples that the final march has begun. The march is not to the civil war the disciples expected or wanted. The only bloodshed in this war would be his. The only sacrifice of human life for the sake of humanity would be his. The disciples he leaves behind will continue to march on.

Here’s the battle cry, “***Hosanna in the highest heaven!***” I know what you’re thinking, how can *Hosanna in the highest heaven*, be a battle cry? Today the cry sounds really fun, but I want you to hear, with a fresh ear, what Jerusalem heard with a fresh ear:

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to love as you have taught us to love.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to have compassion as you have lavished compassion on us.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to show mercy when you have poured mercy upon us like manna from heaven.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to share your grace with the world as you have shared your grace with us.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to act justly when you have showered justice upon us.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to bless the poor in spirit as you have blessed us.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to comfort those who mourn as you have comforted us.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to feed the hungry, as you have fed us.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to clothe the naked as you have clothed us.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to heal the sick as you have healed us.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to hear You as You have heard us.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to take our marching orders from you, orders to march on until heaven is here and now and in the resurrection.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us, we beg! That’s the last part of our loud hosannas: Lord, save us we beg. Save us from ourselves. Send us out with our marching orders to make **this** world a world made in your image; a place of peace, justice, mercy, and grace.

Hosanna: Save us! Save us when we fail to follow you to the cross because it's just too hard. Help us...we beg, to take this journey with you.

Response to the Word: *King of kings and Lord of lords...take your place in our hearts and minds so that your will becomes our will and your way becomes our way. Help us to give ourselves away to you so that you can use us to transform this world into what **you** what it to be...one act of saving faith at a time. **Amen.***