

Prayer of preparation: *Come Thou fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace, Streams of mercy never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise.* God of steadfast love, we sing our blessings to you and you are ever faithful to hear us. Continue to remind us that we are well and truly blessed. In Jesus name we pray. ***Amen.***

This Palm Sunday is different because Luke's gospel is different. In Luke's gospel there aren't any palms waving and the crowd doesn't shout "*Hosanna!*" This year Palm Sunday is all about the gate. What gate, it's the gate we find in Psalm 118, the one Jesus goes through to enter Jerusalem, the gate that's the entry to Jerusalem.

Don't worry. The crowd is still there, the colt is there, and people throw their cloaks on the ground to welcome Jesus' entry. But in Luke's gospel, the people shout something very different, and I want you to hear it because it's important. In Luke's gospel the people shout, ***"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"***

I know you're thinking, *but Pastor...what difference does it make?* It makes all the difference in the world. Thursday night I talked to Doris Younker's former caregiver. She had called the church office and left a message for me to call her. We talked about several things but the one thing she kept reminding me of was my sermon in December. You see, we send our sermons to the sick and shut in and as Doris' caregiver, it was her job to read her the sermon each week. And that sermon in December...well, it stuck with her.

The sermon in December was about Elizabeth passing on blessings... even when you're stuck between a rock and a hard place, passing on blessing that are a present and hope. Our psalmist knows exactly this and knows the source of all our blessings. So, while this Palm Sunday may not be about cries of *Hosanna!*, it is ***all about*** crying out that we are blessed.

According to the psalmist, we are ***blessed*** by God's steadfast love.

We are ***blessed*** by God's righteousness,
We are ***blessed*** by the gate of the Lord,
We are ***blessed*** that God has answered us,
We are ***blessed*** because this is the day that the Lord has made,
We are ***blessed*** and we need to rejoice and be glad,
We are ***blessed*** to be in the house of the Lord,
We are ***blessed*** by the light of the Lord,
We are ***blessed*** that God is our God,
We are ***blessed*** to be able to give thanks to God,
And, we are ***blessed*** to have the victory.

The psalmist knows and passed on through the ages ***all the way to Elizabeth***, that we are ***blessed***. We are blessed because we woke up this morning. We are blessed to be in our right minds. We are blessed to be able to worship. We are blessed to be working. We are blessed to be retired. We are blessed to have problems and we are blessed when we are problem free. We are blessed.

The psalmist knows and passed on through the ages ***all the way to Elizabeth and to each of us***, that we are ***blessed***. We are blessed to have a savior. We are blessed to call on the name of Jesus. We are blessed to call him our chief cornerstone. We are blessed Jesus is the light of the world. We are blessed Jesus came in the name of the Lord. We are blessed to know the King of Kings. We are blessed to know the Lord of Lords. We are blessed to give thanks to the Lord. We are blessed.

We are blessed because there is ***no place*** we can hide from God's saving grace...not even death itself can stop it. But that, my brothers and sisters, is a sermon for an Easter Sunday.

I started this sermon with saying Luke's gospel is different because it's about being blessed. We have indeed been blessed. Our blessing stems from God's promise of salvation – our present and future hope found in Jesus Christ. That was what the psalmist and the crowd was celebrating...knowing that we are blessed because God has heard our cry and sent salvation. May your Holy Week be filled with the knowledge that God has blessed us with salvation.

Response to the Word: *Here I raise my Ebenezer, Here by Thy great help I've come, And I hope by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.* Gracious God, may you ever hear our shouts of praise...especially as we arrive at home in glory. In the name of the crucified Christ. ***Amen.***