

MARCH 24, 2024—PALM SUNDAY; PASTOR ROXIE DAVIS, FPC Port Huron
SERMON: How Do WE Praise God? SCRIPTURE: Psalm 118: 1-8; 19-29
Luke 19: 28-40

INTRODUCTION—PALM SUNDAY

Today is Palm Sunday—it is a day of Praise. A day when the people in Jerusalem, in Jesus' day were celebrating—praising God—glorifying Jesus whom many of them thought was the Messiah—The One who would save them That is what Hosanna means—Save us!! They thought that Jesus, the Messiah, would save God's people from the Roman rule and oppression. They were hoping he would mount up an army to defeat the Romans and free them. But Jesus was not that kind of "riding a white horse" King—Savior; He was a man, humble and giving—They had seen that—No wonder he rode a donkey into Jerusalem—An animal of humility, and not of power.

'Even though some of them had seen Jesus, raise Lazarus from the dead. That's powerful! Others had heard of Him teach with authority—or seen the other miracles—water into wine; leprosy cured; blindness and deafness gone. Many were convinced that "Yes, he was the Long-awaited Messiah—the One who Saves"—even if their idea of what the Messiah would do- was erroneous and mistaken.

JESUS SAVES

Jesus had come to "save" --all right—but it was to save all of us—from that time—Down to this time—To save us from our sin—Our greed, hatred, violence, abuse—All the ugliness that we human do to each other. And to save us from separation from God—That separation was because of our sin. That's the reason why Jesus came—To Save us **for** a relationship with God and a **more loving** relationship with each other.

PEOPLE PRAISING

So we have these people praising God—Jesus in the streets of Jerusalem. How did they praise God? They took Palm Branches and fanned them toward Jesus—In that day, Palm Branches were signs of victory and triumph and goodness. Then the people took their cloaks. Threw them on the ground where the donkey that carried Jesus trampled them. Those cloaks under Jesus--a sign of the people's adoration and humility to be in the presence of Jesus, the blessed King who had come in the name of the Lord.

And the multitude of Jesus' disciples—This group--much larger than the inner

circle of the 12 disciples. They begin “praising God joyfully with a loud voice, for all the deeds of power that they had seen.” Shouting: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and Glory in the highest heavens!” Of course, the religious leaders—Pharisees to be exact—were incensed and said to Jesus: “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” Stop what??—their praising and shouting??—Jesus answered: “I tell you, if these (disciples) were silent, the stones would shout out.”

QUESTION:

That leads us to the question, “How do WE praise God?” As I have reminded you every Sunday, we are in the midst of a Preaching Series on Christian Disciplines: Praising God is one of those Disciplines. In Jesus’ day and even before then, praising God could mean to “Shout to the Lord—Certainly it is to “Sing” to the Lord—That is why some of us volunteer to be in the **Pop-Up Adult Choir**; that is the reason why the **Children Sing**; that is why we **Sing Alot** in our worship of the Lord on Sunday mornings. **It is to praise God; give God the credit and the Glory for all that God has done in our lives.**

PRAISE BASED IN SCRIPTURE

And all of our praise has its basis in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. **Particularly in the Psalms**, we see and hear a lot of praising God—But Why? Because God has done great things in the lives of His people—in our lives.

Hear the words from Psalm 118 (which we read this morning): :“The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation. Shouts of joy and victory resound. The Lord has done mighty things. (And it goes on to say,) “I **WILL proclaim** what the Lord has done. I **WILL give** thanks...For this is the Day that **the Lord** has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. God gets all the credit; all the praise; all the glory.

As it says in Isaiah 43 in the Old Testament: God is speaking here: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ...”I am the Lord, Your God, The Holy One, your Savior...Do not be afraid, for I am with you. You have been called by my name, I formed you and made you. I created you **for MY glory,**”

It is not about us; it is not about what we have done—it is not about what we have accomplished. It is not about our glory. It is about God’s Glory—About what God has done for us and through us. And God’s love and compassion for us sometimes surprisingly comes through others—causing us to give thanks and praise to God.

Let me tell you a little joke about Praising God.

JOKE ABOUT PRAISING GOD A Christian, upon waking up each morning, would open her front door, stand on the porch, and say, "Praise the Lord!"

This angered her neighbor who didn't believe in God. He would yell out of **his** door, "There is no God—no Lord!" One morning the man overheard his neighbor, praying for food. Thinking it would be humorous, he went to the store, bought her all sorts of groceries and left them on her porch.

The next morning the woman said, "Praise the Lord, who gave me this food."

Her neighbor, laughing so hard, yelled, "It wasn't the Lord. It was me!"

The woman, without missing a beat, said, "Praise the Lord—Thank You, Lord, for not only giving me food but having my unbelieving neighbor, pay for it."

Perhaps this Christian woman saw the whole incident not as a joke but as a Miracle. She gives God the glory—Praise the Lord!

STORY IN MY LIFE—TWO MIRACLES

The story that I am about to tell you now, **is no joke**. It is something that I experienced years ago while ministering in another church in Michigan.

There were two men I knew, I prayed over them; and cared about them.,

Both sickly—severe medical issues—In the hospital—both, close to death.

But both got expert medical care. And believe it or not, both were healed.

Both experienced a miracle—from the hands of others--neither one should have lived.

They both were "walking miracles." **The first man, John** realized that he was healed because of God, working through so many people and circumstances in his life.

John's healing was a miracle and he made a point to give all the glory for that miracle to God. How do I know all of this? Because he told everyone. He wanted everyone to know how great God is. He was overwhelmed with thanksgiving and praise for the One who was behind the miracle of his healing—God Himself. He knew, down deep in his heart, that the purpose of his healing was to tell others about God's power and provision in his life. To give God all the glory! **The other man, Ed**—not so much. He was just grateful for the "good luck" that he had come his way; the "good fate" of getting better to live and enjoy some more life with his wife. He pretty much kept "his miracle" to himself and lived out his days.

SCRIPTURES ABOUT PRAISE

I tell you these two stories because there are some very basic things said about “giving God all the glory—all the praise” in what happens in our lives. The Apostle Paul shares his teachings with the Corinthians, who are having a difficult time balancing their life in Christ and the Jewish laws, especially when it comes to eating certain foods. So the Apostle Paul says to them: (I Corinthians 10: 21) **‘Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.’** And then you get these words in **the Book of Colossians**, to the church in that region: (Colossians 3:17) **And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

LAUNDRY LIST OF PRAISE PRACTICES

- So here is a **Laundry List of Praise Practices** you can do on a daily basis. Just ideas for everyday life. Pray Intentionally about your situations—the joys and concerns of your life. Bring glory to God by listening for what God might have to say to you.
- Write Down Things for which you are thankful...
- Notice Your Complaints and Turn Them Into Praise.
- Share your God moments with others/ the miracles in your life...
- Enjoy God's Creation...
- Love God, Love Others ...And Love Yourself.

Most of all, remember the purpose of why we were created. To point to the One who created us. To give God the credit—the praise—the glory **How do WE praise God?** We recognize every morning, that it is God who has given us another day.

And recognize every evening, that God is the mover and shaker in those high and lifted up moments of great joy and celebration in our lives
And God is the steady “Rock,” in those moments when the only way we are holding on to our life’s situation—is because of God’s grace and mercy.

No matter what the season is in our lives, we were created to give glory to the Father in heaven and to give God praise, in all that we do, and in all that we say. We are God’s children—The people of God—The Church—And we too shout—Hosanna -- Save Us-- Blessed is He—Jesus—the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.