

“Lord God, you have appointed me as a Bishop and Pastor in your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon your Word. Use me as your instrument – but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all.”

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”

### MATTHEW 21

<sup>15</sup>But when the chief priests and the experts in the law saw the wonders he performed and heard the children calling out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant. <sup>16</sup>They said to him, “Do you hear what they are saying?”

“Yes,” Jesus told them, “Have you never read,  
‘From the lips of little children and nursing babies  
you have prepared praise?’”

<sup>17</sup>He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.



No one is saying “cowabunga,” “radical,” or “totally tubular” anymore.

- I realized this when I watched the last reboot of the Teenage mutant ninja turtles.
- I was around for the original.
- What are the kids saying? BAE means before an else. SWOL means muscular and toned.
- To refer to your friends these days, you need to say SQUAD or FAM.
- YEET apparently means a rush of emotion, an exclamation of victory, or a battle cry.
- Turn-down-for-what? means there’s no reason to stop the party.
- That’s what the kids are saying.

The children of Jesus’ day also had something to say. You wouldn’t expect a child to take a minister to school on a basic matter of faith like prayer. But on “Holy Monday,” that is what happened. Jesus returned to the city and people were still saying hosanna, especially the children.

### DO YOU HEAR WHAT THE KIDS ARE SAYING?

<sup>15</sup>*But when the chief priests and the experts in the law saw the **wonders** he performed ...*

What does “wonders” mean? Really good? “Wonders” meant Jesus was doing things that caused amazement. Jesus was still leaving jaws unhinged and eyes wide. **His triumphal entry caused wonder** and got people watching, especially His enemies.

The next morning Jesus tipped over tables of the money-changers. This was flagrant and unheard-of. It truly was a wonder to see Him scattering earthly currency with rebuke and the call to repent. Perhaps only one person had done this before, and that was Jesus three years prior, at the beginning of His ministry.

The third wonderful thing Jesus did that day was healing the blind and lame people at the temple. Jesus had been healing for years, but He did this one last session before His ministry ended.

The most noteworthy wonder that He performed was calling forth a response of faith. The children believed in Him and shouted in the temple courts, “*HOSANNA to the Son of David!*” They had marched with Him the day before with the crowds and palm branches. They spread their coats before Him. The children were still singing Jesus’ power to save and exciting entry a day later.

All of these wonders meant the same thing: **Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ.** All the wonderful things Jesus performed were messages. They all said, “See, the one you’ve been waiting for is here.” And the children understood that.

“*Hosanna*” means “*save us.*” It was the traditional welcome cry for the promised Savior. “Son of David” was His title, the King who was coming to set God’s people free. That’s what the children said that day, but they didn’t say it on their own. The Holy Spirit was working in their hearts that day to bring forth these shouts of faith. We expect God to work through His Word, to change hearts and open mouths. His Word will not return to Him empty.

However, while the Word of God always has an effect, sometimes the effect is resistance and further unbelief. Matthew writes that the priests and scribes were “indignant.” These were the experts who spent their days reading the Bible. But when the Bible came to be just as God promised it would in the Old Testament, when the Savior came and revealed Himself, they didn’t recognize Him. They were angry that the people were claiming Jesus as the Messiah, the anointed One of old. Children knew their Savior when the theologians and scholars did not.

It’s no different today. Many intellectuals of our society smirk at simple believers who hope for, as one atheist put it, our “Disneyland in the sky.” People who don’t believe in Jesus often think we are hapless followers and crooked pied pipers. One of the saddest realities of the church in the 21st century is that a large number of pastors and Bible teachers do not even believe in Jesus anymore—at least not with their hearts, as these children did.

- They don’t accept a Savior who died and rose to give us eternal life.
- They don’t claim that God came in the flesh to pay for our sins.
- They deny that God prophesied in the OT that His Son would appear.

That is sad, because God lays it all out before them in their studies of His Word.

All over the world, people refuse to see it. Why? They are sinners, and their judgment is clouded by sin. They don’t want to believe it. People will believe that we may be reincarnated from Napoleon or Joan of Arc. People will believe that God talks to us through our feelings. People will believe in naturalism, that there is nothing immaterial about the world. People will believe that new revelation is needed and more holy books.

But God coming down to earth to pay for our sins with His own blood to keep us from hell? Not that. That would mean God is a judge with an absolute standard of right and wrong. People in our society don’t want to buy that. They think right and wrong really mean what feels right or what seems wrong in the moment. Eternal standards would mean many people are wrong and many people are guilty and that some people actually end up in eternal punishment and torment.

Meanwhile simple believers the world over see Jesus with the faith of a child.

- They recognize a Savior who comes to bring peace.
- They know the only answer for our guilt and for the hurt and sadness of sin is Jesus.

Yes, that means there’s there is relief from our rebellion against God. That means the one who demands right and wrong obeyed right and wrong and became the punishment of the wrong for us. What a humbled and humbling Savior! The simple, humble Christian has no pride in order to say, “I have rebelled against God over and over. But Jesus rode into Jerusalem to be our Savior.”

Palm Sunday is the beginning of the end of Jesus’ life. And He wanted that to happen. Jesus wanted the Romans to nail Him to a cross. He wanted to hang there to be abandoned by the Father. Why? We have broken God’s absolute laws, and that was the only way to erase our record of sin. Unless

Jesus hung on the cross and felt His Father's wrath; unless Jesus suffered hell's eternity and punishment on Good Friday; all people would be doomed to hell.

Therefore Jesus rode into Jerusalem, and on the next day healed the sick, cleansed His Father's house, and inspired the children to sing their song HOSANNA so that untold generations would see the Savior—taking our place, paying for our sins, forgiving us, and giving us everlasting life.

That's what the children were saying on Palm Sunday with every HOSANNA.

God ordains praise from children's lips. He puts prayers and thanksgiving and hymns of faith in their mouths. Through their baptism and through the gospel message at church. Through their teachers at Sunday school and at home, God promises to preach and speak aloud, out of the mouths of babes. Children aren't so burdened with the desire to reason everything out, and they remind us in times of crisis and peace alike that Jesus is with us.

*How can we keep up with what the children are saying?* I'm not so sure about that one. I guess we will just need to open our ears and listen. *Where can we adults find faith like that of little children?* Now that I can tell you. Only in one place—the gospel. The good news of Jesus that comes to us in Word and sacrament. The message that Jesus died and rose for us, that He works for us, that He loves us, helps us, and cares for us is there, in the gospel. That's the first place we find a change in our hearts. That's the one place where God creates and renews faith. That's the only place we find our final rest. HOSANNA! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, HOSANNA!

Amen.