

Little Johnny was sick on Palm Sunday and had to stay home from church. Mom stayed home with him while dad and big sister went to church. When they got home, big sister handed Johnny a palm branch. Johnny asked what is this. Dad replied that is a palm branch Johnny; the people waved them as Jesus walked by. Oh man said little Johnny, wouldn't you know it. I miss one day of church in 5 years and that is the day He shows up!

Do we expect to see Jesus when we come to church? (Pray)

Psalms 113 thru 118 make up the Passover psalms. They are called the hallel psalms because the Hebrew word hallel means praise. It is from this word that we get the word Hallelujah. Psalm 118 is a praise psalm with Messianic overtones. It does not specifically identify the author or the occasion upon which it was written.

Jesus is the Messiah. In this psalm He is called the Gate and the Chief Cornerstone. What is a gate? It is a moveable barrier through which one may enter a closed off area. Verse 20 tells us that Jesus is the gate. Since this gate of righteousness brings us into God's presence, Jesus is the only one who can enter it on His own merits. He is the only one who is righteous. It is only through His righteousness that we may enter that gate. Jesus told us in John 10:9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." Jesus is the door, the gate and the way. Jesus said in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by Me."

Jesus alone is our salvation. His blood was shed on the cross to buy our pardons from God. We can only go through this gate of righteousness when we walk through it covered in the blood of Christ.

By dying for the sins of the world Christ became the cornerstone, the main building block for the church. The Jewish leaders refused to believe that he was their Messiah and had the Roman government execute Him as a trader and a threat to Rome. The Jews rejected Him but, God elected Him as the foundation of His church. Isn't it marvelous how God works? God took the cross, the symbol of suffering and shame, the symbol of Christ's rejection, and made it a symbol of salvation.

In Acts 4:11-12 Peter said "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given

among men by which we must be saved." The name of Jesus is sacred. It is the only name given by which we must be saved. Finding forgiveness love and life in the name of Jesus binds all believers together and puts us in His church.

Paul says in Eph.2:19-22, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints & members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles & prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

We Christians all have faith in the same thing, the blood and love of Christ. 1Cor 1:18 "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Hebrews 12:2 "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Right now Jesus is seated beside God. He stays seated until there is work to be done. In

Acts 7:56 Stephen said "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" Jesus was standing because He was getting ready to welcome Stephen to his new home in heaven. The Jews stoned Stephen to death for his faith in Jesus. Christ himself welcomes us to heaven. And one day Jesus is coming back to get His bride, the church. Are we part of Christ's church?

When we work for Christ, we will face rejection. Jesus understands rejection. Jesus was rejected by His people as a whole. He told His disciples He would be. Jesus said in Luke 9:22 "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." Isaiah 53:3-6 "He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Paul say in Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". He tells us in Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Christ died the death we all deserve so we won't have too. Jesus came to save us from

our sins and give us eternal life. Today is the day of salvation, we need to rejoice and be glad in it.

Today is Palm Sunday; the day Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. All along the 2 mile trip from Bethany to Jerusalem the people were waving palm branches, a sign of victory, and shouting "Hosanna!" Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!"

Hosanna means "save now". Which is what Jesus is about to do. In 5 days Christ will die a sacrificial death for every person. He will bind the sacrifice not with cords to the alter horns but with nails to the old rugged cross. He will shed His blood for us, His precious blood that will wash away each and every sin of each and every person.

The cross is the very reason Jesus came into the world. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." God does not want anyone to miss heaven. That is why it has been roughly 2000 years since Jesus died. God is waiting for all people to repent. 2Peter3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." Jesus also said this in John 3:17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ will bring light into our dark hearts and lives. When we have seen this light, we will ask Jesus to come and live in our heart. We will make Him the king of our life and He will make us new creatures in Him. When the light of Christ shines upon us and we receive everlasting life through His blood, we will praise and exalt our God. "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." Psalm 118 ends with the exact same words it began with. Is God's praise continually in our mouths? Sometimes we get down and sad don't we? Sometimes it is hard to praise God; things aren't going our way, things are tough. Even the Psalmists experienced hard times. But no matter how they felt, they were always honest with God, talked it out and their prayers ended with praise. We need to do the same thing, be honest and faithful. When we trust God, He will give us a reason to rejoice & praise Him.

When we are totally focused on God, His praise spreads easily from our lips. John 12:19

"The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him." Isn't that the goal of Christians, to get the whole world to follow Jesus? How do we do that? By publicly praising God! People want to be happy. They will ask us why we are so happy and we can then tell them about Jesus. Too many people today are clueless about what is important in life and what will

be important in the next one. Too many don't even believe that there is an eternity. They are confused.

Tom Barnard writes, "The crowd was clueless. They never got it right. They shouted praises. He wept. They looked for a warrior-king riding a white stallion. They got a carpenter riding a donkey. They wanted hype. They got a healer. They wanted a prophet. They got One who fulfilled prophecy. They wanted a scepter. They got a Savior. They got nothing they asked for but everything they needed. Only they never got it. They were clueless. Jesus was the only One there who really knew what was happening on that first Palm Sunday. "It's so easy to become like those people in Jerusalem. We think we know what's going on, but we really don't have a clue. We have a bad week, and we blame God. Our kids act out, and we blame the school. We work two jobs and wonder why things aren't better at home. Jesus comes to our town, and He wants to help; but we don't recognize Him for who He is. We think He will be impressed with our boats and our businesses and our stuff. He is not. He wants our hearts. That's what Palm Sunday is all about." Have we given Jesus all our heart? Are we helping others do the same?

In his sermon "Not the Lone Ranger, but the Lone Savior", Roger Griffith said the following. "It was Palm Sunday and Jesus was coming into Jerusalem. He was riding on a blazing white stallion and kicking up a cloud of dust as he rode along. He was looking for trouble. The people that he passed on his way were in awe of such a beautiful animal but they were even more awestruck by the man who was riding it. As Jesus passed by, you could hear the people say, "Who was that masked man?" There were bad guys on the loose and Jesus had a job to do. As he rode into Jerusalem he quickly sized up the situation and formed a plan to capture the ringleader of the troublemakers. His name was Diablo or Satan. There was a short scuffle and Jesus won handily over Diablo. He hog-tied the devil and threw him in jail. As a large crowd of people gathered to see what the commotion was all about, Jesus mounted his horse and pulled on the reigns. The stallion stood on its hind legs, Jesus held the reigns with one hand and lifted his white hat with the other, He shouted with a loud voice, "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever" and road off into the sunset. End quote" Isn't that how Hollywood would have done it? But that is not how it worked in reality was it? Jesus came into Jerusalem humbly riding on a donkey's colt. It was He who got arrested, tried and executed. But as strange as that sounds, this is how He really did defeat Satan. He did not stay dead and buried; on the 3rd day Jesus arose from the dead. He conquered sin and death. He is seated at God's right hand waiting for the day He is sent by God to finally arrest Satan & cast Him into outer darkness for ever & eternity will begin for all believers in Heaven with God. This is Palm Sunday and it starts Holy week. Little Johnny said what if I don't feel like being holy for a whole week. Christians will be holy for all of eternity, we can start this week. Our job is to spread the love of Jesus everywhere we go. Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." Amen!