

**St Paul's Lutheran Church (Latimer, IA)**  
**Palm Sunday – March 24, 2024**  
**Matthew 27:11-54 – Save Us Now**  
**Rev Peter Wagner**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

Save us now! That's what Hosanna means. Save us from the waterless pit, O Lord. From the curse of sin, from death our bitter enemy. Save us from disease and pain, from discouragement, from strife and all the suffering of this fallen world. Save us now.

By their shouts of Hosanna on Palm Sunday, the crowds were calling Jesus their Savior. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Your name, Lord Jesus, your name Jesus means salvation. Yahweh is Salvation, that is your name. That is who you are. Come now, O Lord, and save us.

If these crowds had been silent, the very stones would cry out. For the whole creation has been groaning and waiting eagerly for this moment. Waiting for the Savior, the King. Save us now! Save us from all pain and sin and death. Take your throne and begin to reign.

So rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he. But humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He has not come to save in human power, but in the quiet power of God. Though he is God, he does count equality with God a thing to be grasped. He makes himself nothing, taking the form of a servant. And being found in human form, he humbles himself and becomes obedient unto death, even death on a cross, to save you.

Today the humble Savior enters Jerusalem. In lowly pomp ride on to die. He comes to the temple, and there the children shout again, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The quote from Psalm 118, "Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success!"

They're saying: How long we've waited for you, dear Savior. The words of the prophets ceased long ago. No king has come to the throne of Israel since the days of Zedekiah. And of the ancient kings, none was truly righteous but David your servant. How many generations of our fathers waited for you, Son of David? How many died, hoping to see your day? And now we see you with our own eyes. My own eyes have seen your salvation! We bless you in the name of the Lord, O Christ our King.

The crowds believe the words Jesus spoke, that the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. They believe there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name, under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

But is our Savior with us still? Is our faith in vain? Why do our eyes not see him? For two thousand years, the church has been crying, Hosanna! But still we do not see the salvation and power and kingdom of God.

Instead, our prayer has become the prayer of Psalm 22: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" O God, you rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Where are you now? "Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?"

You punish us justly, O Lord. We know that we deserve the troubles and sorrows we bear. Because of our sins and backsliding, you rightly turn your face away. But hear our repentant cry! We confess our sins, we want to do better. O Lord, have mercy! Save us now.

"We cry out to you by day," says the church, "But you do not answer. And by night, but we find no rest." It feels like our prayers go unheard. Are you there, God? After you died and rose on the third day and ascended into heaven, did you depart forever? How long till you return? Come and save us, O Lord. Bring us out of darkness and the bondage of death.

As we await our Lord's return, let the words of Psalm 22, the great psalm of the crucifixion, be our comfort and hope.

"But you are holy," says Psalm 22, "Enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame."

The Christians of old, the faithful saints of the Old and New Testaments, they cried to you Jesus, and you saved them. As you did for them, we know you will always do for us.

"You took me from the womb, Lord Jesus, you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. Be not far from me, for trouble is near,

and there is none to help.”

We are not alone. Our Savior has not left us as orphans. Our God has not cast us off.

No, our God has shared our suffering. He drank our bitter cup. He stood silently before Pontius Pilate. He hung patiently on the cross. There he cried out in the words of Psalm 22, echoing our pain. His gave voice to all our suffering since the dawn of time. “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me?”

And there on the cross, as the onlookers gawked and derided, he fulfilled every detail of Psalm 22. They pierced his hands and feet. They divided his garments and for his clothing they cast lots. They made mouths at him, they stared and gloated. “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” As they rained down these insults, the mockers never realized that his prophecy had been about the temple of his own body. Even as they laughed, they were playing into his plan of salvation. He let them fulfill his prophecy and destroy his temple. He willingly offered his body so he might raise it up again in three days. So he might build it into the temple of God, his true body, the church.

So he will not come down from the cross. Proving himself is not his goal. No, he chooses instead to share our suffering and give his life as a ransom for many.

This man on the cross, bearing all our sin, this man is also true God. He is God with us, Immanuel. Our God has not abandoned us, he has not left us as orphans. “He has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him.” He heard us when we cried to him. He is with us to save us.

Therefore, in him we can rejoice with the concluding words of Psalm 22:

“I will tell of your name – Jesus – to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him.” Stand in awe of the crucified Lord. Awe of his patient death, his mighty salvation. God is with us to share our suffering. To even put death to death by his death.

Our King gives himself up and bows his head, not in weakness, but in mighty power and love. He dies to split the rocks, to tear the curtains of the temple in two, to rend the heavens and come down to save us. He shakes the earth to its very foundation, to break the power of death and destroy the ancient curse. To bring out from the tombs and out from the graves all the bodies of the saints who have fallen asleep. To fill the earth with awe, and fill his people with praise, that every knee should bow and every tongue confess, “Truly this is the Son of God!”

He chose not to save himself, in order that the world might be saved through him. And therefore God the Father has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Now he speaks peace to the nations; his rule is from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. Truly his kingdom is hidden, but the church extends to the ends of the earth. The elect of all the nations believe in his name, and they are saved. For he is salvation, his name is our strong tower. The righteous run to him and they are safe.

Hosanna in the highest! Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, unto life everlasting. Amen.