

The Glorious Good News

Goldstone Church – 13-Apr-25 10:30am

Psalm 118:1-29

Introduction

One of the psalms Jewish worshippers used as they entered the Temple at Passover was Psalm 118. So, when Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, these words may have been heard and sung. It is a joyful psalm of thanksgiving, written by an unknown psalmist, with the purpose of praising God for His steadfast love and faithfulness. The words recall how God has delivered His people in the past and encourages them to express their gratitude.

1. JESUS: OUR FREEDOM (Psalm 118:19-20)

“Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.” (Psalm 118:19-20 ESV).

The “*gates of righteousness*” are being opened for the speaker, who then leads those who are with Him through these open gates. What are these gates? Why can they open for Him?

King David celebrated when the Ark of the Covenant – the visible representation of the presence of God – was brought into Jerusalem (Psalm 24). *“Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”* (Psalm 24:7 ESV).

Both Psalm 24 and Psalm 118 ask the same question: who is worthy to open these holy doors? Who has the right credentials to enter and pass through this righteous gateway? Answer: *“Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!”* (Psalm 24:8 ESV). (See also Psalm 118:19).

On Palm Sunday, Jesus is the One who can powerfully open the gates of God’s holy city.

The New Testament Gospel writers all record Jesus triumphantly entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey just days before His crucifixion. However, the crowds were so focused on praising Jesus as the King, that they overlooked what He was doing. They didn’t want a humble king, riding a humble donkey. They wanted someone to conquer the occupying Roman forces. They didn’t realise that Jesus did not come to overthrow the Roman soldiers. Jesus came to overthrow Satan – and He would do that by dying on the cross.

Jesus’ humility as He entered Jerusalem presents a puzzle when it comes to the opening of the “*gates of righteousness*”. Clearly, Jesus is the only One who is righteous enough to open these gates. But how can Jesus lead people through those gates if He is on His way to die on the cross? How can a soon-to-be-dead person lead His followers to eternal life?!

“I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord. 18 The Lord has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.” (Psalm 118:17-18 ESV).

“But it was the Lord’s good plan to crush him and cause him grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, and the Lord’s good plan will prosper in his hands.” (Isaiah 53:10 NLT).

Isaiah was prophesying about Jesus, God’s promised Messiah. At the cross, Jesus paid the debt we owe to God. He would conquer death and rise from the dead.

As Christians, we have the certainty that, because of what Jesus did for us, we can enter through the gates of righteousness. We don’t do this because of our own efforts, but because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Jesus frees us from our sins because He has opened the way to righteousness. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we are made right with God, and we can celebrate in His presence.

2. JESUS: OUR FOUNDATION (Psalm 118:21-23)

"I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the [chief] cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

(Psalm 118:21-23 ESV).

The cornerstone is a main foundation block that binds two walls together. It is a major part of a building and often one of the largest blocks. All other parts of the construction are set in reference to the foundation stone. The cornerstone determines the position of the structure.

Jesus applied this picture of a cornerstone to Himself (Matthew 21:42 NIV).

"Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself." (Ephesians 2:20 NLT).

Jesus is the foundation upon which everything in our spiritual lives is built. With Jesus as our chief cornerstone our lives can stand straight, tall, and strong. He is our sure foundation.

As we place our faith in Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross, we can be confident that He is all that we will need in our lives. As we build our spiritual life and our choices on what Jesus has done for us, and the promises He has made, we will not fall or fail. He is our salvation.

As Christians, the whole of our faith rests on the fact that Jesus came to earth, lived a perfect life, died for us, and then He rose again. Irrespective of what challenges we are going through; this is the certainty that we celebrate and why we can thank God.

3. JESUS: OUR FULFILMENT (Psalm 118:24-26)

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord." (Psalm 118:24-26 ESV).

Jesus, the Cornerstone of God's plan for salvation, the Mighty One who conquered sin and death, now ushers in the day of salvation.

Note: the psalmist changes from "I" to "us". This psalm is now a corporate act of thanksgiving as we are to praise God together.

Jesus, the promised Messiah, the Righteous One, has fulfilled the task of opening the gates into God's holy city. In response, we are called to rejoice in what He has done.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday,

"The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"" (Matthew 21:9 NIV).

The word 'hosanna' means, "save us". The same as *"Save us, we pray, O Lord!"* (Psalm 118:25a). This should be our prayer for today.

The prophet Micah painted a picture of God's heavenly kingdom.

"He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth."

(Micah 5:4 NIV).

Because Jesus has fulfilled every requirement of being our Saviour and has set us free from slavery and sin, through Jesus we are made holy and righteous. Because of Jesus, we are clean, pure, and eligible to come into God's holy presence – and to stay with Him forever. This is complete salvation in Jesus.

As Christians, let us declare together our assurance that Jesus has saved us. Hallelujah!

CONCLUSION

On Palm Sunday, the most famous parade in history was not a gimmick, a publicity stunt, a political statement, or a random act. When he rode into Jerusalem, Jesus announced the **Glorious Good News** to everyone throughout history. He declared, once and for all that:

- Jesus is our Freedom
- Jesus is our Foundation
- Jesus is our Fulfilment.

Who are we going to speak to about Jesus?

Amen