

INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
April 14, 2019  
Palm Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Zechariah 9:9-10, Luke 19:28-40  
Hymns: 160; 725; 361; 173:1,4

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: 1 John 5:11-12

“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. <sup>12</sup>He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Palm Sunday

The images of that day are quite clear in our minds. Jesus is approaching Jerusalem from a small town about two miles away. He is riding on a donkey colt. There are crowds of people from not only Judea and Galilee but Jewish pilgrims from distant lands. People spontaneously, or rather with prompting from God in heaven, begin to honor Jesus with their “Hosannas” - a Hebrew word of blessing, calling upon God to save or deliver this Man Jesus whom they are rightly calling the Son of David, and the King of the Jews. They are waving palm branches in

celebration of Jesus' approach to Jerusalem, and then laying them on the road before Him. Some were even laying their cloaks on the road before the donkey, all in honor of Jesus.

This was the kind of reception reserved for great kings returning home after securing a great victory for their people. Why this reception for Jesus? He was seen as a teacher, or a healer. Was He also perceived as a great military leader? What kind of deliverance or victory could this Jesus' have secured for God's people?

We recall that later that week, as Jesus' stood before Pontius Pilate, He testified, "*My kingdom is not of this world.*" (John 18:36) Jesus kingdom was and is a spiritual kingdom; one whose borders extend to the ends of the earth.

The battle Jesus was to fight, the victory He would secure was also a spiritual victory. It was a victory over a fierce enemy, one that we know as the devil, or the old evil foe. Make no mistake this battle had the future of many more people hanging in the balance than any other battle before or since. But this battle had not yet been completed. The victory was yet to be won. By the words of the prophets, by the events of Palm Sunday, God was announcing that the victory was assured! What was at stake was nothing less than the eternal lives of a sinful mankind. What was at stake was **your** life and mine. In the events of Palm Sunday God was proclaiming life for a dead world. What our text teaches us is --

**THEME: This Life Is In His Son!**

John starts this gospel lesson with --

**I. The Testimony of God; He Has Given Us Eternal Life.**

Those are almost the exact words of our text. God has testified! God has affirmed by His own name that what He speaks, what He has declared is the absolute truth.

And what does God have to say to us, about us. Knowing that the testimony of God is true we need to know that He doesn't mince words. God tells it like it is! We are unclean. We are sinful. We were dead, spiritually "*dead in trespasses and sins.*" (Ephesians 2:1) "*The wages of sin is death.*" (Romans 6:23) We all know these Scriptures. The testimony of God about us in our natural state is quite stark.

But then we have the testimony that proceeds from the love and grace of God; "*but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Romans 6:23<sup>b</sup>). This is as absolutely true as all the testimony of God concerning our sin, but He speaks to us in His grace. **The testimony of God is that He has given us eternal life.** He has given us **life**, and not sentenced us to **eternal death**. Life instead of death. Not because we merited or deserved it. He didn't commute our sentence because of our good behavior. He **gave** us eternal life. "*It is the gift of God not of works, lest any man should boast.*" (Ephesians 2:9) He gave us life. We didn't earn or deserve it.

He gave us eternal life. The life that we now have, this spiritual life, the connection we have with God as our dear Father, with Him calling us His dear children, this is **eternal** life. This life overwhelms temporal death. It is a greater reality than temporal death. For the child of God physical death is temporal death. Why do we call it temporal death, because it is just that; it is temporary. Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.*"<sup>26</sup> *And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*" (John 11:25-26)

Now we are right up to the how this is even possible. It's not in us. God's testimony is that **this life is in His Son.**

What is the testimony of God about His Son? **“This life is in His Son.”** (v.11) We heard what God had to say concerning Jesus at His baptism in the Jordan River and then again on the Mount of Transfiguration. The Father said concerning Jesus: *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”* (Matthew 17:5) Jesus was a man. There is no doubt about that. Everyone saw Jesus as a man. People knew Him as a boy. They had watched Jesus grow up and learn the trades, working with Joseph, whom they all supposed was His father. Jesus was a builder working in the trades until Jesus began His public ministry. The testimony of God concerning Jesus left no doubt that Jesus was and is and ever shall be also true God, the eternal Son of God. Jesus is the Messiah who was to come into the world. He came as the Servant of the Lord to secure life and salvation for a world of sinners. God the Father is well pleased with Jesus.

Make no mistake about it that was **God’s** plan and intent, to secure salvation for a world of sinners through Jesus. *“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16) This is God’s testimony concerning Jesus; that He has come to secure everlasting life for this world of sinners. But here we do note that **faith** is essential to possessing this life.

## **II. Only He Who Has the Son Has Life.**

This is still God’s testimony. It is God’s truth, and it cannot be set aside. *“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”* (v.12) It’s all tied up in Jesus as our Redeemer. The night before Jesus died, only a short time before Judas betrayed Jesus, He was preparing the disciples for the things that were about to happen. These things would be very upsetting for them and would shake them to the very core of their being, of their faith. Jesus said:

**John 14:1-6** “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup>In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. <sup>4</sup>And where I go you know, and the way you know.” <sup>5</sup>Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

This eternal life was what Jesus was securing for the all who believe in Him. He went to the cross and the grave and on to the Father in heaven to prepare a place for us. Jesus told His disciples that they knew both where He was going, returning to His Father in heaven, and they knew the way to get there themselves. That is when a confused Thomas asserted that they didn’t know where Jesus was going or the way to get there. Jesus spelled it out, not only for Thomas and the rest of the disciples, but also for us. **Jesus** is the way to heaven. **Jesus** is the way to God. **Jesus** is the way to eternal life. **Jesus** is the truth that saves.

The truth is that Jesus’ holy precious blood not only paid the ransom price for our souls, paying our debt to God, but the shedding of **His** blood defeated the devil’s plot to bring all mankind down to eternal death with him. Jesus died for us and rose again that we might have life in His name. That is the truth, the gospel truth, the only truth, the very truth of God. No one, absolutely no one comes to God the Father except through Jesus.

*“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”* (v.12) We have the Son through faith. It is when one puts his trust and confidence in Jesus for righteousness and eternal life that one has the Son. Even this doesn’t happen by our own reason or

strength. *"No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit."* (1 Corinthians 12:3) Paul wrote in Ephesians, *"by grace you have been saved through faith."* (Ephesians 2:8) When we trust the words and promises of God, when we look to the cross of Christ and see there our hope of life and salvation then we have the Son. Then we have life, and there is no other way.

Standing before the Jewish high council the Sanhedrin, Peter and John testified concerning Jesus, *"<sup>11</sup> This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' <sup>12</sup> Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:11-12) The Jewish council had rejected that cornerstone of God's church, the foundation stone of God's truth and salvation. In their unbelief they did not have the Son of God, and so they did not have life. And so it is *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."* (Mark 16:16) Believe in what? That there is a God? Not enough! One must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior from sin, who alone can bring us to God in peace. In this faith, and in this faith alone there is eternal life.

Today is Palm Sunday. Earlier we talked about the significance of Palm Sunday as a day when God the Father called forth from the people the honor and the recognition due Jesus as His Son, as our Savior King. We consider Palm Sunday's significance in light of what would transpire later that week. Palm Sunday is about Jesus, the Champion of our salvation going forth to battle the devil and win our salvation. **"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."** (v.10)

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.