



Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.mzluth.org

April 5, 2009
Palm Sunday
Revelation 7:9-12
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Zechariah 9:9,10
Psalm of the Day: Psalm 24
Second Lesson: Philippians 2:5-11
Gospel: Mark 11:1-10

Salvation Belongs to God; He Gives it to Us Freely

You young ladies in the Confirmation Class and you other ladies here, can you relate to this at all? Has this ever happened to you? Maybe with a sister, your mom, or someone else, you see them and they are wearing clothes that are yours. You say, "Hey, that's mine! What are you wearing it for?" Did you ever start a fight that way?

I doubt you guys have ever done that, right? You never said to anyone else in the family, "Hey, those are my clothes. Take it off." You could care less who is wearing what clothes, right? I'm guessing you guys are probably more likely to do that with food, right? The last piece of pizza, the last piece of dessert or something; "That's mine! Get your hands off it! I called it," right? You've probably done that in your life, haven't you?

Both those instances, which probably many of us have experienced in one way, shape or form over our lives, kind of illustrate something about us, right? By our very nature, we are very selfish beasts, aren't we? It's all about me. It's all about what's mine. We can be just downright nasty when it comes to something that's ours.

So this morning, as we look at these Words of our God from the Book of Revelation, I want you to see just how exactly opposite God is. Those people in those white robes carrying those palm branches that John saw in this vision, notice what they are saying about God. "Salvation belongs to our God." Our God doesn't look at us and say "It's mine! Go get your own." Our God says to us, "What's mine is yours."

Isn't that what this week is all about? Salvation belongs to our God and he gives it to us freely. He gives it to us fully. He gives it to us through the perfect life and the death of Jesus in our place. And this week we get to revel in that truth. We get to marvel at that truth. We get to bask ourselves in that truth as we come together to worship God Thursday and Friday and Sunday and see this incredible truth that salvation, which is only God's, he says to us "Here's what I did, but now here. It's yours. I lived in your place. I died in your place. I took away your sins."

That's the truth you guys have been studying, right? Over the course of your instruction and through other times in your life, this is the truth you've been learning. You can't do thing one to save yourself. It all belongs to God and he gives it to us. That's the palm branches, the symbol of victory. We remind ourselves that Jesus came to win the victory when he entered Jerusalem. He did it in a way that no one expected. He won a

victory like no other king has ever one. But he won the victory none the less. So we celebrate with palm branches in festal procession and bring them to the horns of the altar.

This is the great truth. God has said to us “What’s mine is yours.” But also, take a look again at the beginning of what I read to you from Revelation. Did you notice in there, didn’t it talk about “I looked and before me was a great multitude from every nation, tribe, language and people.” God gives to us this salvation and says “What’s mine is yours,” but it’s also implicit that when he gives it to us, he wants us to share this salvation. He wants us to know this salvation, grow in this salvation, go with this salvation and share it with others so that people from every nation, tribe, language and people can be there in heaven with us.

That’s why it’s so important what you’ve been told over and over through your Confirmation instruction is that even though many things that you do on this day treat it as though it’s a graduation; we stick a flower on you, maybe even stick you as we put the pin in it. We put you in gowns. We give you all kinds of gifts, and then you look at what you see around this at times. You see people, maybe more wrapped up in the celebration itself and preparing for a party than spending time with the Word of God. And you can say to yourself the Word of God isn’t that important. “I’m done with that. It’s over. Get it out of my life. I don’t have to do it. I don’t have to go to Youth Group for Bible Study. I know all there is to know now. I know more than most of the people that sit in these pews. Why should I go learn more?”

If you become independent of God thinking you know enough, just remember this one lesson. “Independent” is only one syllable away from “idiot.” If you think you can be independent of God, you are an idiot. You need God. You need to walk close to him. You need to know him more and more and get to know him better and better so that you can share your faith so that every nation, tribe, language and people can be there so that they can be a part of the people singing praise and glory to God and singing his praises both now and in eternity. God hasn’t called you just to praise him and serve him. He’s also called you to share him.

There are some of you that have the gifts and the ability to go on into fulltime Gospel ministry if that’s what you so choose. There are other people in our congregation that have those gifts that I certainly hope will explore them and choose to use them in the fulltime Gospel ministry. But even if God does not move you to go into the fulltime Gospel ministry, that does not mean that when you are there on that Last Day and God separates the lambs and the goats, the sheep and the goats, you know what I’m talking about; when you look around you on the side of the sheep, there are people there that you shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with. Think about that; that the rest of eternity you are spending this time praising God and being in this great cloud from every nation, tribe, language and people, and God used you. He did the work, but he used you to share your faith with someone else.

If this is the last day you ever wear a white gown and sing praises to God, that's pretty sad, right? God has called you to know him and confess your faith in him, and you will do that. God has also called you to live your faith and share your faith with others.

So don't let all the trappings and all the wrapping paper and all the things you wad up and throw into a corner later today convince you you're done. If anyone shakes your hand today and tells you "There, you're done with that," just slap them. Just slap them right across the face. Go ahead; not that hard, but just slap them so that you remind them that you are never done growing in Christ.