“Christ in the Psalms: The Gate of the Lord”

Psalm 118:1, 15-29; Heb. 10:12-14; 1Peter 2:4-10

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 4/10/22)

 This ancient hymn is the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. The multitude shouted out the words of this psalm as Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. On Palm Sunday, we celebrate the victory won by God’s anointed King, Jesus. Let’s take a look at our Christ in this psalm.

**Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem**

 The King has come to save His people (Ps. 118:25-26; Matt. 21:9). The author is using poetry, “gates”, to describe access to God. These “gates” lead to friendship and relationship with God. They are called “gates of righteousness” because only the righteous receive a warm welcome from God. Universalism, a prevailing heresy of our day, says that ALL will be accepted and welcomed by God. Not true! Only those who repent, believe, and follow Jesus will be welcomed by the Father. Will God welcome you, or will He say, “Depart from me!”? (Q1)

 These gates are closed tightly from our birth, as we are all born with a sin nature (Rom. 3:10). NOT ONE OF US MAY OPEN THESE GATES ON OUR OWN MERIT! Now read Matt. 7:13-14. Jesus is the narrow gate. If you stay on the broad way, you will find God in His wrath eternally. The gates only open for the King, and for those who belong to Him. (Q2)

 Alas, Palm Sunday is bittersweet. The shouts of “Hosanna!” rapidly turned to “Crucify Him!” Even today, people get enthused about Jesus, but they lack clarity about why He came. The palm branch was a symbol of Jewish identity, a symbol of their resistance to the Romans. Some in the crowd were confusing their patriotism with their worship of God. They were cheering for a King of their own making. (Q3)

**Jesus’ Rejection by Religious Leaders**

 Jesus did not meet the expectations of the pharisees, either. This Chief Cornerstone became a stumbling block to them. A building derives its alignment and its strength from the cornerstone, the special stone laid first (Ps. 118:22; Matt. 21:42). Even today, many call themselves Christians, but they don’t want to get in alignment with King Jesus. They treat Him with apathy or rejection. YOU CAN’T HAVE CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND NOT AS KING. (Q4)

**Jesus’ Crucifixion**

 Ps. 118:27 refers to the cross: lambs and bulls were not bound on the altar, but our Savior was bound to the cross. This leads us to a crucial question: how are the “gates of the righteous” opened for you, as unrighteous as you are? Read the answer in Heb. 10:12-14. WOW! Only by faith in this King are the “gates of righteousness” opened for you. (Q5)

**The Establishment of Christ’s Church**

 What is the result of the King’s death and resurrection? THE CHURCH, a people God is calling to Himself. So, stop carrying your sin and guilt and shame. Jesus carried it to the cross for you! His people are no longer alienated from Him. The Chief Cornerstone is the Cornerstone of the Church! Now read the wonderful words of 1Peter 2:4-10. You might ask, “What if I don’t have enough faith?” Well, even a weak faith in a strong Savior gets you to Heaven!

 Jesus won for you a great victory, and He shares that victory with you. It’s no wonder this psalm begins and ends with praise. **JESUS** is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous shall enter. Do you love to sing His praises?! (Q6)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Suppose someone dining with you says, “Well, everyone goes to Heaven.” What would you say? What scriptures back you up?
2. Can you stay perfect for the rest of your life? Can you undo every sin you’ve ever committed? It is a gift from God to see yourself as you really are: a sinner standing before a HOLY God. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and leads us to repentance. But maybe if we define what sin is, we won’t be so quick to excuse ourselves. What sins do even the “best” people get caught up in?
3. Some people feel they are Christians just because they are Americans. In your own words, what does it mean to be a Christian?
4. What is owed to a King? (Don’t we owe that to Jesus?)
5. Heb. 10:14 talks about being made righteous by Jesus’ once-for-all sacrifice. Does this mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! What habits can help those who are “made righteous” walk worthy of their new status?
6. 1Peter 2:9 encourages us to “proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Who is in a dark place and needs to hear this from you? How are you going to tell them?

“My Hope is Built on Nothing Less (The Solid Rock)” (Mote)

1 My hope is built on nothing less

than Jesus' blood and righteousness;

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,

but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:

all other ground is sinking sand;

all other ground is sinking sand.

2 When darkness veils his lovely face,

I rest on his unchanging grace;

in every high and stormy gale,

my anchor holds within the veil. [Refrain]

4 When he shall come with trumpet sound,

O may I then in him be found:

dressed in his righteousness alone,

faultless to stand before the throne. [Refrain]