

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Palm Sunday, April 5, 2009**

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Hymns: 630, 162: 5, 160, 161, 631.

Lessons: Zechariah 9: 9-10, Hebrews 12: 1-11, Matthew 21:1-16

Text: Psalm 8:1-2.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, dear fellow redeemed,

How do we know for sure that an Old Testament passage points to Jesus Christ, or to an event in the New Testament? The best way is when the New Testament itself tells us. Jesus quotes this verse from Psalm 8 on the first Palm Sunday.

This is also one of the clearest places where the New Testament serves as a commentary on an Old Testament verse, and Jesus uses the word “praise” where the KJV in the psalm uses “strength”. Listen: *“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.”* Psalms 8:2 (KJV) *“From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.”* Psalms 8:2 (NIV) The word “Praise” makes perfect sense, for the time and place where Jesus quotes this psalm is a special situation when children were praising him. And in doing this on Palm Sunday, the children really did silence the foes and enemies of Jesus, who were bent on revenge because they didn’t like his message of salvation, and 5 days later they actually did murder Jesus.

Today let us see that

**CHILDREN PRAISE THE LORD, SILENCING GOD’S ENEMIES!**

- 1. What kind of words do your children learn and use?**
- 2. The importance of teaching your children the right words.**
- 3. On the first Palm Sunday, children shouted *“Hosanna to the Son of David!”***

When our children first start to talk, we are very much excited about the words they use. Sometimes as they grow older they begin using words which are inappropriate or even profane and we are shocked. But children learn what they hear. If children hear only words of the world, that is what they will say. If children learn to praise God, if they call upon God’s name in every trouble, “pray, praise, and give thanks”, those will be the kinds of words that you will hear from them.

Christian parents have a difficult time bringing their children up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), and it is growing more difficult all the time as we approach judgment day. Children today have sources for learning things and words which we couldn’t even imagine a generation ago. Some of you grew up with radio and, rarely, a movie in a theatre as ways the world outside your home and community came into your lives. Then came television, with three or four channels to choose from. Then came such things as cable television with more channels. Then came video cassette recorders and the movies they made available – on our own television screens in our own living rooms! And then CDs and DVDs and MP3 players and satellite television and more cable television with hundreds of channels to choose from to be shown on big screens in our own “media rooms”. And you can be sure that not everything, not every word that came into your lives was and is totally God-pleasing.

God tells us in Proverbs 22:6 *“Train a child in the way he should go”*. Today the calling, the job of Christian parents is more difficult than ever when we also have to consider where our children spend their time.

We send children to school, putting them in someone else's hands for 7 or more hours a day, starting with their time on the bus. If we consider after school activities, our children spend even more time away from home. That is about half of a child's waking hours spent in the presence of others, listening to and learning from someone else.

How wisely and how carefully are you making use of the time you do have with and for your children? Are you teaching them only things they need to know for this world or are you also teaching them things they need to know for the next world? They surely aren't learning the things necessary for eternal life during the hours they are away at school!

But when you are preparing them for eternal life by teaching about Jesus and all he has to teach us, it will also help them in this world. The first and most important thing of all is knowing Jesus has prepared heaven for them and is preparing them for heaven. The most important knowledge is the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior from all sin.

What about all the other things they can learn from God's Words that they can apply to this life? For example, the Word of God teaches us law and gospel, sin and grace, wickedness and forgiveness of sins. We are talking about law, the commandments, sin, about what the world needs to keep it going. This world revolves around laws. Every sinful human being – and there is no other kind, with the sole exception throughout history being Jesus Christ – needs to know law. And if those human laws are broken, neglected, and not enforced, things do not go well on earth. St. Paul says this about the importance of good leaders on earth: ***"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."*** 1 Timothy 2:1-2. Where laws are not obeyed and not enforced, even Christians will not be able to live their lives quietly serving God and their fellow man. Another idea that can be applied to life in this world is the concept of sin and the forgiveness of sins. How important it is to be able to say "I'm sorry" when I sin, and to be able to say "I forgive you" when someone sins against you! True forgiveness is not a trait of the unrepentant human being, but is something the Christian can even teach by example.

From the Holy Scriptures, our children learn values – what is right and what is wrong. The morality of the world is heading in the direction of "anything goes". Even civil laws used to be geared toward not hurting others. But more and more, morality is being taught that says 'do what you think is good for you.' Perhaps one of the most obvious breakdowns in the teaching of morality is that anything goes in regard to sexual behavior. The world says 'Do what you want to do and don't be bound by anyone else's moral code.' When people don't know right from wrong; when civil laws are broken, set aside and neglected, when people try to find ways around those laws or think it's OK for them to obey laws only when they feel like it, when people feel that we have the right to do whatever we want to do and when those responsible for enforcing those laws aren't doing their jobs, what happens? We then live in a society of anarchy. Remember, we are living in a world in which Satan has great power.

Your children are learning a sense of right and wrong – from you! They may not be learning that same sense of right and wrong, or the sense of right and wrong you want them to learn and you want to reinforce, from the people with whom they spend 7 or more hours a day. When we adults work in the world, we ourselves know that many of the people we work with don't have our God-taught sense of right and wrong either. We often have to work very hard to contradict what the world is teaching our children. Parents have a major responsibility, so that our children, too, may glorify God: ***"From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger."*** This is what God wants from all his children, regardless of their ages.

But most important is that our children learn the way of salvation. Jesus is clear when he says ***"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*** John 14:6. Even that message is contradicted by the world! But you have taught and are teaching and living that Jesus Christ is the most important thing in your life. Your eternal salvation, earned by Jesus Christ on the cross, is a free gift from God. How is that gift delivered to men? God gave us the means of grace – the gospel in the Word and in the

Sacraments – Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. You are hearing about that gospel from the Word right now. And God has given us the sacrament of baptism to work or strengthen faith.

Why do we baptize children? We do this to bring children into God’s kingdom. Christ gives us the command to baptize, but we also know what baptism gives or profits us, what baptism does for us. Baptism works forgiveness of sin, delivers from death and the devil and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the Words and promises of God declare. Those Words are found in the last chapter of Mark, ***"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*** Mark 16:16. We know that it is certainly not the water that does such things, but God's Word which is in and with the water, and faith which trusts this Word used with the water. For without God's Word the water is just plain water and not Baptism. But with the Word it is Baptism. God's Word makes it a washing through which God graciously forgives our sin and grants us rebirth and a new life through the Holy Spirit. St. Paul says in Titus, chapter 3, ***"God saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying."***

You want your children to grow up praising God, too. You want them to pray and sing and praise God, just as the children were doing on that first Palm Sunday. According to Luke, our sermon text isn’t the first time unbelieving Jews demanded that Jesus tell his followers to be silent. It happened earlier in the day: ***"When [Jesus] came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.""*** Luke 19:37-40.

That attack from the enemies of Jesus is repeated later in the day as we heard from Matthew’s Gospel: ***"The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"*** Matthew 21: 14-16. Here you read the direct application of the prophecy from Psalm 8 to Jesus Christ.

There were obviously children singing and shouting about the Son of David when Jesus first came into Jerusalem on that day. And they were still around later in day: children praising God! But the unbelieving leaders of the Jews – who should have led them in praising the Messiah – indignantly demanded those praising Jesus be silent. These are the same enemies of Jesus who five days later were demanding Jesus’ crucifixion! But today Jesus quotes scripture: ***"have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"*** Earlier he had said that if those praising him were silenced, even the stones would speak out! And so these children praising God really did ***"silence the foe and the avenger."***

Even late in the day there were still children in temple area praising Jesus! Out of mouths of babes God has ordained praise! That’s what God wants. That is what we want to teach our children. And we don’t rely on others to do it – we shouldn’t rely on others to do it. For adult instruction classes for a number of years your pastor has been using Luther’s Small Catechism because it was written so that “the head of the family should teach it in the simplest way to those in his household”. At some point in your life even you may be in a place where you are the sole religious teacher of your family, when you don’t have your pastor nearby to teach your children.

***"Train a child in the way he should go"***, God says, so that your children, too, may praise God. He has ordained that is the way it should be. May we all praise God here in time and hereafter in eternity. Amen.