

Palm Sunday –March 29, 2015 Confirmation Sunday  
Text: Matthew 21:1-9  
Theme: "It's All in the Name"

**One's name is a very important concept in Scripture. Your name tells people who you are, and not just a random collection of letters that sounds pretty but something about you. Saul was the Hebrew word for "asked for" because the people asked God for a king. Samuel meant "God has heard" because Samuel's mother prayed for him to be born to her. Today, most people are named a name because their parents like the sound of it or to honor a member of the family but in Biblical times, the name meant something about you.**

**Jesus was named Jesus because the word Jesus means Yahweh Saves. And the crowds knew that. The reason they lined the streets on that first Palm Sunday as Jesus made his way into Jerusalem for his final trip to the holy city was because they knew he had come to save them. They were probably thinking of salvation from Roman rule, but in fact, God had much bigger things in mind. The people shouted Hosanna, which means "save us," as Jesus passed by them. He had been sent to do that very thing. It is what his name had long promised. Yahweh Saves!**

**This fact was not lost on the Jewish rulers of the day. They saw the crowds worshipping Jesus of Nazareth and they knew that**

**this had to be stopped. If Jesus ended up being the Messiah, the anointed one sent by God to deliver his people, all of the religious leaders, employed by the temple, would be out of work and out of a position of power and prestige. It was going to be tricky though because this new King was not behaving like a would-be king should behave. For the one thing, he was riding in a donkey.**

**Had he come in on a warhorse, it would have been easier. "Look Romans! We told you that he was trying to take over! Here he is crashing through the gates on a warhorse. Arrest him!" But just as Jesus had humbled himself by taking on human flesh and would humble himself by dying on a cross so he was humbling himself at his entrance to Jerusalem. When you carry the name of Yahweh, you don't need a flashy steed.**

**You and I are no different from Jesus for we carry that same name and belong to that same family. On this Palm Sunday, we confirm three of our 8<sup>th</sup> graders and we remind them that they are Baptized into the name of Jesus. Today we confirm them in the faith into which they are Baptized. They in turn take the vow of service and obedience to Jesus. They promise to remain faithful to Jesus, even if they must die to do so. I will ask them,**

**“Do you intend to live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death?” They will respond,**

**“I do, by the grace of God.” And I will ask them,**

**“Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?”**

**And they will respond,**

**“I do, by the grace of God.”**

**It seems a little scary when you take that vow, to die rather than abandon the faith, but it’s not really scary at all. If we were dependent upon our own abilities to remain faithful, this vow would be terrifying but we are not dependent upon our own abilities. We are in the name of Jesus, of Yahweh himself and that name means something. Wherever we go, whatever we do, we carry his name before us so, like him, we don’t need a flashy warhorse. We are content to travel with him in our humble bodies, walking on our humble feet, but knowing that he goes before us in all things. All things! Loss of loved ones, loss of jobs, struggling relationships, life changes...he goes before us in ALL THINGS.**

**We face many battles in life. There was a time when I thought, if I can just get out on my own and away from my parents, everything will be easy then. Then I thought, if I can just make**

**\$20,000 a year, life will be easy then. Then I thought, if I can just get this degree finished and get a real job, life will be easy then. Well guess what. Life never is easy. The battles keep coming because that's just the way it is in a broken sinful world where people are mean and money corrupts and temptation lies around every corner. But what I have discovered is this. The only battle that ever really mattered had already been fought and won on the cross.**

**We may have earthly names to identify us like Rob or Madison or Paul or Danielle but the name that matters is the name we all have in Baptism, the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. That is the name that gives us our inheritance which is this. Christ died and rose so that all the battles we fight will be turned for our good. Whether we win or lose is of no consequence because we belong to Jesus' family. He has promised to turn all things for our good. He lifts us up, empowers us, feeds us with his Word and Sacrament and strengthens us to humbly follow him throughout all our days and that is what we will do, because we humbly bear his name.**