

**[Story]** A Sunday school teacher asked the children just before she dismissed them to go to church, “Why is it necessary to be quiet in church?” Annie replied, “Because people are sleeping!”

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Well, our church has never been a quiet church. It might be a miracle or you are dead tired if you can snooze out during church here. You can hear a rooster crows during the time of worship and reminding us not to deny Jesus like Peter. The sound/view of Pacific Ocean radiates through the palm trees before us. We hear the giggling sound of children from the Sunday school classroom. We hear the cars passing by up on the Palani Road. You also hear the amazing sound of music through our music ministers and me Sunny talking. It would be a miracle if you can sleep throughout the service, especially today when we started the worship by shouting out “Hosanna!”

The English word “hosanna” comes from a Greek word “hōsanná (ὡσαννά)” which comes from a Hebrew phrase “hoshiya-na (הושיעה־נא)” that is found in the Old Testament, Psalm 118:25. It means, “Save me now!” It is a cry for help. Like when somebody pushes you off the diving board before you learn how to swim and you come up hollering: “Help, save me...*Hoshiya-na!* Can you hear me? Save me!” For me, I shout out “Hosanna” when I see bugs 😊

When this phrase, *hoshiya-na*, came to the New Testament and translated into Greek from Hebrew, the cry for help, *hoshiya-na*, was answered almost before it was shouted out. “Hosanna to the Son of David!” (Matthew 21:9, 15); “Hosanna in the highest!” (Mark 11:9, 10); “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Matthew 21:9; John 12:13). *Hoshiya-na* became a shout of hope saying “Salvation! Salvation has come!”

*Hoshiya-na* used to be what you would say when you fell off the diving board, but it came to be what you would say when you see the lifeguard coming to save you! It is the bubbling over of a heart that sees hope, joy, and salvation on the way and cannot keep it in. So, “Hosanna!” means, “Hooray for salvation! It’s coming! It’s

here! Salvation! Salvation! Can you hear me?” The phrase, *hoshiya-na*, moved from plea to praise; from cry to confidence.

Today’s scripture is often used for Mission Sunday—What does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. This is not a plane statement asking people what the Lord require of them. This is the shout of Prophet Micah to the people in church who grew complacent, apathetic! There was no excitement in coming together as a community of faith and worshipping God like they did in the past.

The people of Israel in Micah’s time forgot God who led them from slavery to liberation. They had become a people willing to bargain, to bribe, even trying to buy off God. They satisfied with the tithe they gave. They satisfied with the regular worship they attended. They just did things because they had been doing so, but no excitement as they once had before. To these people, Prophet Micah shouted out, “Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God! That’s what God requires of you! God has already told you of these. Can you hear me now? Are you paying attention at all?”

Today, you and I are here because of God’s people who responded to Micah’s shout—act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God—when we shouted out, *hoshiya-na*—Save me now!! Help me now! From our past, there was someone, at least one if not more, who acted justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with God when we shouted out for help.

When I brought up in a single parent’s home, I remembered the church men’s group always came to my place fixing things for my family—changing light bulbs or working on the plumbing, etc. I remembered when I was sick, the wife of the pastor who was a nurse came to my place to take care of me while my mom was at work. When I moved to America without knowing anyone, the people at the new church we found in America went extra miles for my family—the pastor and the church folks took my family everywhere to help us settle in. When my mom was in a hospice bed, the church folks created a 24/7 caring team making sure someone from the church would be with my family all the time to help and support. When I moved from San Francisco to here Kona 1 ½ years ago, many of you went extra miles for me.

I am who I am now with the transformed “Hosanna” from the cry of “Hosanna” to the praise of “Hosanna” because of those people and many of you who acted justly,

love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Those are the ones who raise us up when we are down and weary. Those are the ones who come and sit with us when we are in need of someone. Those are the ones who transform the meaning of Hosanna, from the “Save me now” cry out to the praise of “Salvation is here now.” Those are the ones whom God wants us to be for someone in the name of God the Creator, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Let us have a moment to think about those who heard you when you cried out “Hosanna” and acted justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with God for you. Also, let us have a moment to think about someone who is crying out “Hosanna,” asking “Save me! Help me! Can you hear me now?” Think about someone who needs you to act justly, loved mercy, and walk humbly with God to transform their “Save me now” cry out to the praise of “Salvation is here now” while listening the special music, “You Raise Me Up” sung by Bernaldo Evangelista and preparing our gift of heart to God. Let us be in the moment of reflection.

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## **You Raise Me Up**

By Josh Groban

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJxrX42WcjQ>

When I am down, and, oh, my soul, so weary  
When troubles come, and my heart burdened be  
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence  
Until you come and sit awhile with me

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up to more than I can be