

PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP

PASTOR: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

ALL: Hosanna in the highest!

PASTOR: Let us pray: We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ. Today He entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed Messiah and King by those who spread garments and branches along His way. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to His death and resurrection, we may enter into life with You; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen

PASTOR: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God our Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

ALL: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

PASTOR: We cannot come closer to God as we are. It is only through the gracious forgiveness Christ won for us that we are considered righteous under God's Law. Let us confess our sins.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and our sinful condition.

PASTOR: Father in heaven, David thanked you for answering him and becoming his salvation.

Your Son humbled Himself and became a human being to die in our place. But we confess that in our disobedience we have sinned in thought, word, and deed.

He was obedient to death and took our sins with Him to the cross. You have exalted Him that every knee should bow. We confess that without your help we are bound to continue in sin as your rebellious children. Hosanna! Save us, O Lord!

PASTOR: Are you truly sorry for your sins? If so, answer by saying **"I Am."**

PASTOR: Do you believe that Jesus took your sins upon Himself to the cross, paid for them with His own innocent suffering and death? If so, answer by saying **I DO SO BELIEVE.**

PASTOR: Is it your intent, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to amend your sinful life? And, where once you lived for sin and self, to now live for Jesus Christ and Him alone? If so, answer by saying, **YES, THAT IS MY SOLEMN VOW.**

For Jesus' sake, our gracious God has given us His Son's own righteousness. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

INTROIT

PASTOR: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord.

Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord.

KYRIE: (repeat after me)

Lord, have mercy upon us!

Christ, have mercy upon us!

Lord, have mercy upon us!

SALUTATION

PASTOR: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Deuteronomy 32:36–39

The LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free. Then he will say, "Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection! "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; & there is none that can deliver out of my hand."

PASTOR: This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL

Christ entered once for all into the holy places, by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance. He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Alleluia!

EPISTLE: Philippians 2:5–11

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

PASTOR: This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

PASTOR: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 19th. chapter

ALL: Glory to You, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 19:28-44

And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it." And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

PASTOR: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to You, O Christ.

NICENE CREED (spoken in unison)

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

SERMON: The Palm Sunday Surprise (Luke 19:28-44)

The celebration of Palm Sunday has always been a bittersweet moment in the life of the Church. Symbolically the palm branch represented victory, triumph and peace. But the cries of the people when Jesus entered Jerusalem missed the distinct KIND of victory and peace which Jesus would bring. Namely, peace with God through the forgiveness of sins & eternal life with Him. **“And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the**

Lord! Peace in heaven & glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

To us in the 21st century, this may not seem like much of an event. One man on a colt. People paving the roadway with their coats. Waving palm branches. But in Jesus' day, a display like this was a definite political statement. It was an event to honor a winner and celebrate a triumph. Little did most of the people realize that when they exclaimed the words, **"Blessed is the King, who comes in the name of the Lord,"** they were directly fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 which reads, **"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."**

Luke alone records this next part of the story as Jesus continued in the parade. As he looked out over Jerusalem we read Jesus' reaction: **"And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you**

down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Jesus "wept" over the city. In our society, if you were honored in a parade, you would be expected to wave to the crowd with sort of a "slow motion" wave, and nod your head approvingly. I always get a laugh out of those who "blow kisses" back to their admiring audience. But Jesus responds in Luke with quite a SURPRISING response: Jesus "wept" over the city. It was NOT just because He was humanly sensitive and caring. The word used for "wept" here means that He WAILED: He "cried out as a mourner in a funeral procession", not as the guest of honor in a victory parade.

It is NOT a "personal pity party" that He is celebrating through His tears because He knew every excruciating part of the journey He would take before the following Sabbath. He isn't grieving the loss of His own life or the pain and agony of rejection, but He sees the bigger picture! He is grieving the loss of the lives and hearts of the people because THEY will reject Him as the Messiah sent from God! The people seemed to recognize limited "kingship" in Jesus but certainly not the fact that Jesus had come to be the Prince of Peace, the one who had come to Sovereignly die for the lost sheep of Israel.

Jesus weiled because HE was God's Gift to humankind, the Son of God, coming first of all to Israel, God's chosen people. God created them to be HIS OWN PEOPLE, He chose them.

As Deuteronomy 7 says, **"The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt."** (Deut. 7:7-8)

He spoke to them through His Word, and it was recorded in Hebrew, the language of the Jews because Yahweh, the one eternal true God, was known as "The God of the Hebrews". He had chosen to reveal Himself to THEM and He covenanted with THEM, and all throughout the Old Testament journey, God continued to be faithful, and now Jesus knew that Israel would choose to crucify Him as a sinner and reject Him as their Messiah.

Jesus' "crying" coincides with Matthew 23:37-38, **"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!"**

REJECTION OF GOD'S SAVIOR is NEVER left unpunished. The problem is never God's unwilling heart or desire to save, it is the fault of sinners and the hardness of THEIR HEARTS to repent. "I WANTED TO GATHER YOUR CHILDREN TOGETHER, and YOU WERE UNWILLING." And you WOULD NOT! Jesus was expressing what John would later write in John 1:10-11, it would sound like this: **"I WAS IN THE WORLD AND THE WORLD WAS MADE THROUGH ME AND YET THE WORLD DID NOT KNOW ME. I CAME TO MY OWN PEOPLE AND THEY DID NOT RECEIVE ME."**

And John 3:17-19 would read: **"For God did not send (ME) into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through (ME). Whoever believes in (ME) is not condemned, but whoever does not believe in ME is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come (I HAVE COME) into the world, and people loved the darkness (THEIR OWN SIN AND SELVES) rather than the (ME) because their works were evil."**

Their works AGREED WITH THEIR HEARTS. Jesus cried at His own parade, not because he was emotional, not because He would fail, not because He felt sorry for himself, but because the people who had heard the message to repent, did not repent! THE CRY of CHRIST weeps for the lost because they are being "broken off", (that is the verb associated with the word for "wept".) broken off from God- separated from Him by their own sinful

unbelief. Normally, these tears are associated with remorse due to a sense of guilt: Jesus' tears were for the guilty who did not recognize their own sin and they would die in their own sin. Their Hosannas should have been SAVE US FROM OUR SINFUL SELVES, not from Caesar.

What made for PEACE was hidden from them. **"Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."**

Jerusalem means the city of peace, the people sang: "Peace in heaven!" The angels sang: "PEACE on Earth" at Jesus' birth, but Jesus says to the people: YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT WOULD BRING YOU PEACE! Jesus, the "Prince of Peace", was staring them in the face and they loved the signs and miracles He did, but they did not recognize who HE WAS because... It was concealed, it was hidden from their eyes so that it would NOT become known to them. WHY? Because of their own persistent wickedness, their own hardness of heart and rejection of God's ways, and NOW their rejection of God's promised Messiah. Why is there such turmoil in the World today? Why is our country on the brink of disaster? Why are such atrocities happening to those who believe and confess that Jesus is Lord? When people plead, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," are they REALLY doing that? You can try and "create" an atmosphere of tranquility; you can sign so-called "peace treaties" and hope that everyone keeps their end of the bargain...but ONLY THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WILL BRING PEACE!

Only Jesus can provide true peace because only Jesus saves from sin and transforms hearts and lives. Only Jesus can fix what is "broken off" from God.

The world is filled with symptoms of brokenness, of being lost in sin, struggles of all kinds: We see the effects of sin and the only "cure" is in Christ alone. It is only in Christ that you receive the fruit of true love, peace and lasting joy. He produces it in you. The Prince of Peace himself had proclaimed this through His life He was living proof, He had come to bring the peace of God that passes all understanding. He, himself is our PEACE. In a world that is constantly filled with unrest, with war, with dissention, with sickness, and disease who wouldn't desire peace? But Jesus said, "You did not recognize the time of his coming," They did not recognize Jesus; instead, they crucified Him and so they would be destroyed. Sin and rejection of God's Perfect sacrifice demands justice, and here the CRY of CHRIST also promises punishment for those who reject the perfect offering of God for sin.

God keeps ALL the promises that he has made: Jesus promised: Not one stone will remain upon another. Jerusalem and its beautiful temple as well as its people were destroyed in 70 AD as Jesus had promised. Jesus will return one day to judge the living and the dead, as He has promised.

You can't find peace. You can't create peace. You can't manufacture it. Peace isn't the absence of war or unrest. Peace is found in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and ONLY in Him. Jesus brought the peace of God without

armies by giving Himself as the peace offering for sin. That fulfilled message of the Gospel has been brought to the world. It was not written in the Hebrew language because the Jews rejected the Christ. It was written in the language of the Gentiles of Jesus' time. It was written in Greek for the whole world to hear: that Jesus alone brings forgiveness and salvation through His work on the cross, received into lives by power of His Holy Spirit. The Message is that Jesus, Himself, IS the Truth and HE is our Peace, and there is no other way to enter His Kingdom than through Him, and that by faith not by works.

Verse 44 says: "**Because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.**" Have you recognized that He came to save you? That there is a day in which He is coming again? The "Hosannas" on Palm Sunday (which means "SAVE US NOW") were self-centered. They did not consider repentance or bringing honor to the ONE who saves. If we know the Christ, not only of Palm Sunday, but especially of the Cross, our lives will demonstrate that He indeed HAS saved us, and more and more we desire to Honor and Serve Him and Him alone. He deserves the worship of our lives. Amen.

Napoleon was asked if he enjoyed the people's enthusiastic greetings, and he replied that "**should circumstances change, the people would just as enthusiastically watch me die.**"

We know this to be true in the life of Jesus. When a hero, even God, Himself, does not give people what they want, their cheers can quickly turn into jeers. The human tide of popularity can change in a hurry. The cheerleaders on Palm Sunday disappeared by Friday. The new cry was, "Crucify him!"...but this, too, was the Sovereign will and plan of God. May our cry to our God be: Thank you for the Cross. Thank you for saving a sinner like myself.

Thank you for working to fit me into your new temple of living stones. Thank you for changing my heart, transforming me into your image. Lord, save me from my sin and self. Amen!

LET US PRAY: May our hearts be houses of prayer, worship and service for you, O Lord, places where you are worshiped and adored. May our hearts be thrones from which you reign in and through our lives, now and forever. May our hearts be holy temples to you, O God, our peace on earth, as well as our peace and glory in heaven. To the praise of your glorious name. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

PASTOR: Let us pray for the people of God around the world and for all people in their various needs.

Lord Jesus, although knowing about Judas' plans, you arranged for the Passover, which foreshadowed the Lord's Supper. Strengthen the faith of your people here and wherever the Sacrament is celebrated, as we receive the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, which come to us through your body and blood. Lord, in your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Lord Jesus, although their Lord, at table you taught your disciples the nature of true servanthood. Guide and direct all who work in the healing professions, in police departments and armed forces, in all levels of government, and in the cultivation and distribution of crops, that they see themselves as your servants for the common good and be given the wisdom and guidance they need. Lord, in your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Lord Jesus, although Peter spoke confidently, you knew that in weakness he would deny you; yet you said he would turn and strengthen his brothers. Strengthen all whose faith is weak, those who face this day burdened by their past errors, and all who cannot comprehend the depth of your love that they realize and rejoice in the forgiveness you so freely offer. Lord, in your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: In the garden, although you prayed in anguish, you asked that the Father's will be done. [We remember before you especially ...] Grant courage to them and all who struggle with sudden crisis or long-term illness, all who are near death, and all who languish, unjustly imprisoned or discriminated against, that they rely on your gracious plans. Lord, in your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: On the cross, although facing death Yourself, You promised paradise to a criminal and proclaimed the payment for our sins finished. Grant that Your Holy Spirit open the ears of those who have not heard the Gospel in terms they can understand and believe, that they rejoice with us in the forgiveness of sins and the paradise that awaits all who rely on Your grace and love. Lord, in your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: At the end, although you could not do anything physically, you committed your spirit to the Father. Into Your hands, heavenly Father, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

LORD'S PRAYER (spoken in unison)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION