

PALM SUNDAY, April 13, 2025 Lent 6 "Bread for the Road"

Psalms 118 837 VU I Corinthians 11:23-26 John 12:12-19 and 27-36

How many of you remember doing this for family trips in the car? There was a Styrofoam ice chest and it was filled with ice cubes. And in the chest were placed sandwiches, juices and fruit for the road trip that would take hours. The idea of packing food and drinks was because there were no rest areas along major roads and of course restaurants were few and far between communities. No one thought about buying 'fast food' as it was very expensive and it was better to save the money for the cost of the gas. Sometimes the trips would be two or three hours and if it was in the summer it was hot in the car- no a/c and of course the ice in the ice chest would melt. So when it was time to eat- what was there? Soggy sandwiches and water around the fruit. But this was what it was. One did what one had to do-- take water and food for travelling along the road. Because one did not know when you would stop and find a 'decent' diner open to families or even open past 6 pm.

Things have changed where now there is a/c in the car, you can have portable refrigerators in your vehicles and it seems even five km or so there is a fast food restaurant ready to take your order. But what has not changed is the need for food and drink as one travels the roads to different destinations.

This is Palm Sunday and our Lenten journey now shifts from a time of learning about Jesus to why we follow him. Jesus has grown very popular in the countryside and he knows that danger awaits him in Jerusalem because those in charge of the synagogues and the established faith are threatened by this man who 'claims to be the son of God' and who has been drawing crowds as he teaches the way to live. The threats are real and the disciples want to protect him. But Jesus knows that what lies ahead at the time when the Jewish people would be celebrating Passover is the fulfillment of his purpose. To be the one who would die for the sake of others to receive forgiveness and the hope and promise of eternal life.

As palm branches waved and people placed them on the ground Jesus knows that there is a plot to arrest and put him on trial. Yet he also knows his purpose. HE receives the praises of the people knowing that in a short time the crowds would soon cry crucify. He also knows that he wants to be with his closest friends before all this comes into play and so he comes to Jerusalem for the Passover feast of remembrance and to share in community with those whom he has come to love and care for.

WE remember the hosannas as Jesus paraded into the city on a donkey. A few short days later when all things were ready, Jesus was with the disciples and eating the Passover meal. When they had finished eating Jesus took bread gave thanks, broke it and said this is my body that is for you. Then he took the cup and saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you eat and drink in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." This is what was read from I Corinthians 11 and is what we do today-- we are remembering Jesus. Eating and drinking - bread and the cup.

But why did Jesus do this? He had just had his fill from the meal which had been prepared to remember the Passover. This was a great feast remembering the time when God saved his people by having the angel of death pass over the homes of those who had placed lamb's blood on their doorposts. And in this act, the pharaoh let them go out of Egypt to travel to their promised land. They had been freed from slavery into freedom. And in time, it is this group of Jewish people who raised Jesus in the faith.

Yet now here is Jesus now doing something different to encourage those followers then and believers today. He is offering bread and the cup for the journey which he knew he had to make. He knew what was going to happen. One of the disciples had betrayed him, and he would soon be arrested. So he offers this bread and cup for the road ahead; it is nourishment for what he needs for what is to come and for those with whom he eats to remain steadfast and strong to witness what will happen. Jesus is the bread and body- but the disciples are still not sure what to think.

Jesus spoke to them about his death and being lifted up with people will be drawn to him. But did they understand then? No. Yet as we read in John 12 Jesus also speaks about the light which was with the people for only a little longer; He encouraged people to walk his way for he knew that he would die. But he also knew that he would live again to offer hope to all with the promise of eternal life.

But this gets us ahead of the story! Jesus comes into Jerusalem with praise and hope in the hearts of those who welcome him. They knew who he was and were glad to see his presence. Maybe some of them had heard him speak, healed a family member or just his presence was overwhelming. So they shout and are happy to see him. However Jesus knows that it would not end well for him by the end of the weekdays.

SO here we are over 2000 years later still remembering the palms, the meal he shared with the disciples and we are praying for an ever changing unbelieving world that does not fully grasp who Jesus was, is and can be in our hearts. And we do what Jesus asked us to do in remembrance of the night of the Passover, and pray as we hear the story again. For we who have heard the Passion story know-- that after his arrest, trial and death there is new found hope for all people. We just need to be ready for this. We need to eat the bread for the road and know that we are not alone as we remember. WE need to eat the bread which shall sustain us always. This is Jesus the bread of life. Amen

PRAYER

be with us God as we take bread, give thanks and break it to share all in remembrance of Jesus our Saviour. SILENCE Amen.