

Sunday April 10 2022 Lent 6 Remembering Jesus' Triumphal Entry and ...

Philippians 2:5-11 Mark 14:1-2, 15-25

A few months ago we were filled with excitement because we were going to celebrate Jesus' birth. There were decorations everywhere- in the church, stores, city streets, homes and schools. We anticipated seeing those items because they signified something important was going to happen.

Today our church has red banners and palm branches- both green ones and crosses and there is a sense of excitement too. But why? We are not remembering Jesus' birth but his arrival into Jerusalem as he began a week of challenge and eventually a time when the world would be changed by him and through him. As he rode upon a borrowed donkey with a saddle made of coats, are we really excited about this story of Jesus? Or are we just wanting to skip to next Sunday's celebration of Easter?

Yet as we read from Paul's letter to the Philippians there was something about Jesus that drew people to him. There had been other prophets who had come before him and claimed that they had the way to God and would bring change. But Jesus came as a baby taking human form. How could this be the messiah? Those who had been seeking a messiah were looking for someone different. They were seeking one who did not criticize the established groups- of rule and religion but one who would lift up the people who sought a charismatic person with clout and influence and a way of presenting the truth that would get people's attention. Yet here was Jesus riding a donkey- not in a chariot. He had no escort into the city but the people who had heard him speak about a new way to love and live. There were no trumpets or instruments announcing his appearance, but simply people stripping the branches of trees and waving them and shouting Hosanna. Save us.

Paul writes: Jesus emptied himself as a slave—that is one who serves- and in a humble way he became obedient to his purpose- which was to die on a cross.

Did Jesus know what was going to happen? Yes! But did the people? Maybe- but there was uncertainty because they wondered how this man living as an itinerant preacher- was going to change their perspective on the world. How was a man with the ability to speak well and heal those in need, bring a new hope to those who heard his message of grace and reconciliation?

One can only imagine what was going on in Jesus' mind as he is riding the donkey. Here he was the son of God given the task of reconciling humans to the Creator-God- himself. People are wanting him to do something big and showy as he rides at a slow pace into the streets. Those who do not ask, who is this man? The crowd answers he is the messiah. No explanation was needed- they were all oppressed. What was going to happen?

We need to remember that God was in charge of what was going to happen. Prophets had written about this man Jesus who seemed so ordinary yet was extraordinary. Isaiah 53 states: "he grew up like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He had not form or majesty that we should look at him nothing in his appearance that we should desire him." He didn't attract crowds because he was handsome or liked being the centre of attention. He was an ordinary man. Yet Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. And the lost were those people who had turned away from living God's ways and who were in need of love and support as they lived each day. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.

Jesus' ride into Jerusalem was just the first part of the story of his passion. Jesus taught the disciples that he would die but they didn't want to hear it. He told them that he would be betrayed, denied, and he would die. He prayed for his disciples and he agonized over what was to come but, on that triumphal ride into Jerusalem, Jesus sat with grace and humility. He saw the faces of those who were glad to see him. He heard their pleas to be helped and he knew that this was his purpose. And now was the time= he was ready to ride on and die.

As we prepare to walk through this holy week, we need to remember what happened to Jesus was for us- even though we are living almost two thousand years later. He came to save all people from sin, death and separation from God. He came to offer us hope when the world seems to be lacking. He came to offer us possibility of how we might reach out and help others. And he came to teach us how to love. For it is through God's love for us that Jesus came to save us. Through God's grace for us all- there is the potential of eternal life if we only choose to follow.

As we anticipate the story of Jesus unfolding in our hearts and minds; as we come together on Good Friday to hear how he put forth his own life for the sake of others, we need to do what he asks. To remember him= as the one riding on the donkey with shouts of Hosanna abounding. We need to remember that before they ate the Passover meal, he was the one who

washed the feet of his disciples. Jesus was the one who said, "Eat and drink in my name." he also spoke from the cross before he died. Are we willing to hear these powerful words again? Are we willing to share his love and live? God's grace is for everyone. We need to tell others and live out our Christian calling with graciousness, with compassion and with humility. For this is the way to live like Christ Jesus.

Let us fulfill our faith promises as we seek to follow Jesus way of love. Let us rejoice and know that as Christ's disciples we continue to shout—"Hosanna!" Save us.

Let us pray

God of mercy, Christ of mercy, God of mercy. Hear us as we sing and shout Hosanna. Show us how to live and love as Jesus did with humility and grace. Enable us to experience His presence at the table wherever we are sitting and call us to renew our faith as we seek His love and forgiveness. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.