

Daily Discipleship

Palm Sunday (A) – Matthew 21:1-11

[Passion Sunday (A)- Matthew 26:14-27:66]

Discipleship: *An Instrument of Giving*

Focus Question: *This week how might you be an instrument of God's giving?*

word of life

“The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven.’” Matthew 21:9 (NRSV)

Read Matthew 21:1-11

On Palm Sunday worshippers often gather outside a church or in the church's narthex and hold their palms high in the air. They listen to the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem waiting to join the chant, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”

1. *Describe that scene as Jesus enters Jerusalem.*
2. *What traditions do you associate with Palm Sunday in today's churches?*

The story begins with Jesus making methodical preparations for his entry into Jerusalem. This week in the life of Jesus does not begin with a random event. He sends two disciples to make the final arrangements for the donkey. If by chance there are complications or questions, these disciples are instructed to reply, “The Lord has need of them.” (Matthew 21:3 NRSV) Jesus is not a passive victim, but one who willingly enters into Jerusalem, even though he has predicted his own death.

3. *How would you respond if someone said to you, “The Lord has need”?*
4. *What might the Lord need from you this week?*

All four gospels describe the entry into Jerusalem with similar details. It is an entrance worthy of royalty. Whereas most people of that day walk into the city, Jesus rides. Unlike kings who come in a carriage, he rides on a donkey. Whereas most people enter the holy city without fanfare, Jesus draws a crowd of people who are willing to place their garments on the road. The crowd goes ahead of him, preparing the way for Jesus.

5. *What makes this entrance into the holy city so special?*
6. *How does it contrast with the coming events of the week?*

Psalm 118:25-26 is quoted by the crowd. Take a moment to read Psalm 118:27-29. Note the tone of victory in this song. The Jews had been waiting for centuries for such a day when God's anointed and David's descendent would claim his rightful throne in Jerusalem. Yet, Jesus did not come with sword or an army. He enters the city as royalty, but with humility.

7. *What do you think the crowds mean when they proclaim, “Hosanna to the Son of David”?*
8. *What would it have been like to have been part of the crowds?*
9. *Do you believe all who shouted “Hosanna” were followers of Jesus?*

It has become popular on Palm Sunday to begin with the reading of Jesus entering Jerusalem, but also to read the entire passion narrative. Thus, the congregation is invited to move from the victory song of a parade through the pains of betrayal and denial to death on the cross. Yet, God remains faithful despite the behavior of humanity towards God's very own Son.

word *among us*

Take a moment to read through the passion narrative found in Matthew 26:14-27:66. Take your time to read, reflect, and ponder the meaning behind the actions of Jesus, the disciples, and others. Make a list of the range of emotions experienced within this final week of the life of Jesus.

This section begins with the plot to kill Jesus and the anointing of Jesus by a woman. The passion narrative includes the final meal of Jesus with his disciples before his own disciples turn against him. He is betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, and abandoned by the others. Jesus is also questioned, stripped, mocked, whipped, and crucified by those in authority.

After the death of Jesus, the guards secure the tomb. His death is final and he is buried. It is quite a contrast from the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It appears to be the end of the story.

All seems lost in this tragic story of a king who rode into town on a donkey.

1. *What can one expect from a ruler who carries no weapon or has no army?*
2. *Describe the emotions experienced by Jesus during this week.*
3. *Describe the emotions experienced by the followers of Jesus during the last week of his life.*

Holy Week! It is a week in the life of Jesus filled with passion.

4. *What does this one week in the life of Jesus mean for your own life?*
5. *How has your life been changed because Jesus was willing to sacrifice his life?*

Holy Week. It is a week set aside.

6. *But for what?*
7. *How might you set aside Holy Week this year?*
8. *How might you keep vigil with Jesus during this most holy of weeks?*

Holy Week! Yet, we know Easter is coming! The death of Jesus is not the end of the story.

9. *What happens after the burial?*
10. *What can be said to those who want to skip from the joy of the palm processional to the Easter lilies?*

Holy Week! Thanks be to God for Holy Week.

11. *Take extra time this week to ponder the significance of the Holy Week and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.*

Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. For it is giving, that we receive. Amen

Dig Deeper

Matthew 26:14-27:66.

last word

Pray each day this week:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
For it is giving that we receive.



Daily Discipleship

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

Copyright © 2008 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May be reproduced for local, non-sale use provided the above copyright notice is included.

www.elca.org/evangelizingchurch/dailydiscipleship

Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday (A) Page 2 of 2