

PALM SUNDAY TAKE-HOME SUNDAY SCHOOL

Read:

Matthew 21:1-11

¹When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” ⁴This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

⁵ “Tell the daughter of Zion,

Look, your king is coming to you,

humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The 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!”

¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Reflect:

- 1) Jesus fulfills an Old Testament prophecy when he arrives in town “humble and mounted on a donkey.” Indeed, a donkey was not “prestigious” or fit for a king! Why would have Jesus have chosen such a lowly means of presenting himself? Do you think he cared about earthly glory? And how does that reflect on what WE should be striving for and caring about?
- 2) Here we see an amazing scene. People are welcoming Jesus into Nazareth with tons of excitement and love, because they have heard about his acts of great compassion and his unbelievable wisdom. They even proclaim that he comes from God (“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”). With all this said, why do you think, just one week later, Jesus is given up by the Jews to be crucified? What does this teach us about human nature? How is this similar to our own faith?

Suggested answers:

- 1) The Jewish people had always thought that their Messiah would look like a typical kingly ruler. Strong, mighty, powerful, triumphant. However, Jesus was sent to earth to change the rules about what true power looked like. He was meant to show a different kind of kingdom to the Jewish people – one that was more about sacrifice, love, kindness, and eternal life (not temporary satisfaction). God knew that true “power” lay in one’s soul, in heaven, not in earthly conquest. Jesus represents that when he enters town on a donkey, not in some kind of royal chariot.
- 2) Technically Jesus is betrayed because the Jewish leaders (afraid of all the social and religious norms Jesus was transgressing) are able to persuade the masses of Jews that Jesus is bad. To me, this highlights two things: A) the way in which we ALL need to be wary of corrupt leaders with an agenda, even today, because they can twist a story to fit what they desire, and B) that as a human race we are so easily persuaded by propaganda. We need to act based on what our heart and faith is telling us, not what higher ups in society, or even in church, tell us we “should” be doing.

Additionally, the way in which Jesus goes from alleged hero to alleged criminal in just a week span demonstrates just how fickle we can be as humans. How often do we in our own faith say that we trust God, and then the very next minute try to control every aspect of our lives or get angry at God because things don’t go according to our plans. Could this Holy Week story not be a message to all of us that we can very easily all fall under the trap of betraying God by not being faithful and by making decisions out of self-interest and not out of loyalty to the Lord?

Closing Prayer:

1. O Lord, who on this day entered the rebellious city that later rejected you:
we confess that our wills are as rebellious as Jerusalem's,
that our faith is often more show than substance,
that our hearts are in need of cleansing.
Have mercy on us, son of David, Savior of our lives.
Help us to lay at your feet
all that we have and all that we are, trusting you
to forgive what is sinful,
to heal what is broken,
to welcome our praises,
and to receive us as your own.

—written by John Paarlberg, retired minister of Word and sacrament