

Palm/Passion Sunday Year C 2010
Philippians 2:5–11, Reading of Passion
Sermon for Advent LC
March 28th, 2010

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Risen Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest they yelled as Jesus rode past on the donkey down the street. Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest we exclaimed as we started our worship this morning in the park, with our palm branches waiving above our heads, remembering the celebration that went on for Jesus as he enters the city and heads towards his destination.

Crucify him, Crucify Him, Crucify him they yelled as he stood trial before the leaders and the great crowd. Crucify him, Crucify him, we yelled as we took part in the reading of the passion of our Lord Jesus. Crucify him...that's what they did...that's what we did and do.

This day, this Palm/Passion Sunday is a day that demands us to wrestle a bit with the uncomfortable feeling of those distinct poles in how Jesus was greeted by probably some of the same people. Also, it forces us to struggle with our own life of faith, our own life in Christ and the way that we either shout Hosanna or Crucify him by the way that we live. Every year this day comes along, and every year I find myself struggling through the thoughts of how this could be— one day— exalted King, Messiah of the Land and another day criminal prepared to be crucified. For me, I am torn at the fact that so quickly we shift our focus. It did not use to be THIS quick. It used to be in the church that Palm Sunday stood alone, but because so many people would not come out on Good Friday and therefore never hear the story of Jesus' death the church shifted this Sunday to be Passion Sunday as well— a day when we hear the death of Christ. So today it kind of feels confused shouts of “Jesus Reigns” to “Crucify Him”. But even in the life of Christ this shift was quick and drastic. In a week's time Jesus went from exclaimed king to convicted criminal. Again, for me— this brings a bunch of emotion. What does it do to you? Where is Jesus now in your life— king, or an afterthought? Your response to that question dear friends is your confession and is your story...think about it and let it form you.

Paul, in our reading from Philippians professes that “at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”. Dear friends, this week, this Holy Week that starts today is a calling for you to truly think about what your confession is of who Jesus is to you. What does the love of Christ do to you? What does the death of your savior for your sins, call you to be? Only you know how you respond, but the Lord calls for a changed life...are you there?

As this week goes on, we as a community will be gathering to reflect on our own confessions. Wednesday we will show the Passion of The Christ and reflect on the amazing sacrifice of our Lord. On Thursday to experience Jesus and the disciples gathering together, sharing a meal, and Jesus washing their feet in an act of servant

hood, we will worship at the LAUM. We will share communion, and also take part in a foot washing service- to remember what Jesus did with his closest friends before he was betrayed. On Good Friday we will hear the story of Jesus' betrayal again, and we will pray and sing together. There is a lot going on this week- at this church, but more importantly in the life of Christ and I want to invite you to be part of it- to experience it, to live it, so that on Sunday morning when we say Christ has risen, you will have a new sense of what he has risen from. Dear friends, let this week be a final step in your preparation this year on your journey to the cross. Let the story of Jesus cross paths with the story of your life, let it sink into your identity, and let it lead you to a greater confession that Jesus is your Lord.

Here's the deal- Jesus is heading to the cross- because of our sin and our brokenness. I plead with you to step back, to make this week Holy in your life and think long and hard about what your identity in Christ truly is so that we you shout He Is Risen, you also shout that you have risen from your own darkness.

God Loves you and so do I. Amen.