



Sunday, March 24, 2024

Palm Sunday

Introduction

This week, the center of the church's year, is one of striking contrasts: Jesus rides into Jerusalem surrounded by shouts of glory, only to be left alone to die on the cross, abandoned by even his closest friends. Mark's gospel presents Jesus in his complete human vulnerability: agitated, grieved, scared, forsaken.

Though we lament Christ's suffering and all human suffering, we also expect God's salvation: in the wine and bread, Jesus promises that his death will mark a new covenant with all people. We enter this holy week thirsty for the completion of God's astonishing work.

Processional Gospel: Mark 11:1-11

Jesus enters Jerusalem

¹When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, [Jesus] sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.' " ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

11 Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Opening Hymn All glory, laud, and honor ELW 344

Refrain

All glory, laud, and honor
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.

3 The multitude of pilgrims
with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and
anthems before you we present.
Refrain

1 You are the king of Israel
and David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming,
our King and Blessed One.
Refrain

4 To you, before your passion,
they sang their hymns of praise.
To you, now high exalted,
our melody we raise. *Refrain*

2 The company of angels
are praising you on high;
creation and all mortals
in chorus make reply. *Refrain*

5 Their praises you accepted;
accept the prayers we bring,
great author of all goodness,
O good and gracious King.
Refrain

Text: Theodulph of Orleans, 760-821; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who writes the law on our hearts,
who draws all people together through Jesus. **Amen.**
Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one
another.

Holy God,
we confess that we are caught in snares of sin and cannot break free.
We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold.
We speak in ways that silence others.
We are silent when we should speak up.
We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred.
For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord.
Amen.

Here is a flood of grace: Out of love for the whole world, God draws near to us, breaks every snare of sin, washes away our wrongs, and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood of Jesus Christ. **By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord and with their lives praise him as Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

Amen.

Children's Message

Traveling song: ACS 1075

O God, we call, O God, we call, from deep inside we yearn, from deep inside we yearn, from deep inside we yearn for you.

Psalm: Psalm 31:9-16

9Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble;
my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.

**10For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.**

11I am the scorn of all my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors, a dismay to my acquaintances; when they see me in the street they avoid me.

12Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind; I am as useless as a broken pot.

13For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around;
they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.

14But as for me, I have trusted in you, O Lord. I have said, "You are my God.

15My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

16Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love."

Word of Life, Word of God: **Thanks be to God!**

Second Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

Christ did not act to attain status and glory but was obedient to God even to the point of death. Following Christ's example, we do not seek personal status or glory but care for others as God cared for us in Christ's death.

5Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
6who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
7but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
8he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

9Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
10so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Word of Life, Word of God: Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation: Return to the Lord our God!

ELW page 142, Setting 3

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and abounding in steadfast love.

Gospel: Mark 14:1-9

Simon had leprosy and still Jesus broke bread and ate with him at his home. While this is not unusual for Jesus, it gets even better. An unnamed woman breaks open a jar of incredibly expensive perfume and lavishes it upon Jesus.

1It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; 2for they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

3While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. 4But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? 5For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. 6But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me.

7For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. 8She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. 9Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ! **Thanks be to God!**

Sermon

The Intimate Nature of God's Grace

PJ



Sermon Song

What Wondrous Love Is This ELW 666

- 1 What wondrous love is this,
O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this,
O my soul!
What wondrous love is this
that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse
for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for
my soul?
- 2 When I was sinking down,
sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down,
sinking down,
when I was sinking down
beneath God's righteous
frown,
Christ laid aside his crown
for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for
my soul.
- 3 To God and to the Lamb
I will sing, I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb I will
sing;
to God and to the Lamb,
who is the great I AM,
while millions join the theme,
I will sing, I will sing,
while millions join the theme,
I will sing.
- 4 And when from death I'm
free,
I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
and when from death I'm
free, I'll sing on;
and when from death I'm
free,
I'll sing God's love for me,
and through eternity
I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
and through eternity I'll sing
on.

Text: North American folk hymn,
19th cent., alt.

Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

Blessed One, today the church sings glad hosannas as we enter Holy Week. Prepare us to bear witness to Christ's suffering and death endured for our sake. Gather your people around the cross and comfort us with resurrection hope. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We ask that you abide with those who are ill and separated from community. Help us to attend to their care with love and grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Renew your good creation and protect the balance of life on earth. Encourage the work of foresters, scientists, arborists, gardeners, and river keepers. We pray for the health of pollinating insects, songbirds, and native plants. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Establish peace and justice among the nations. Hold to account any with authority to judge others. Grant that courts, legislatures, and local governments will serve with integrity and compassion. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Bring hope to any who feel forsaken or forgotten. Make a way for refugees and asylum seekers. Reunite families enduring separation. We pray for any who are incarcerated, institutionalized, or in foster care, that they may know your love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Give energy and joy to our pastor/s, deacons, worship leaders, and musicians. Bless baptismal candidates, their sponsors, confirmands, and teachers. Watch over those who travel. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Blessed One, our times are in your hand. Sustain us in discipleship throughout our lives and receive us into everlasting life. **Your mercy is great.**

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

The Sharing of the Peace

Special Music

Offering Prayer

Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. **Amen.**

Eucharistic Prayer

God is with you. **And also with you.**

Rejoice with full hearts. **We offer them to God.**

Let us give thanks to our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

God, there is no time, no place where you are not present, and there is no time, no place where we should not practice the joy of praising you: even here, even now, in our ordinary lives.

As we give thanks, we join the choir of our ancestors and our heirs and all God's angels as they tune their breath to the rhythm of joy and sing of heaven despite the world.

The Sanctus is Sung! ELW 144, Setting 3

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

On the last night of his life, as evening fell,
Jesus sat down to dinner with his friends.
He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it,
and passed it around the table for everyone to eat, saying,

This is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

When the meal had ended, the shadows closing in, Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and invited everyone to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the heart of fear and pain, God plants the seed of our joy:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Send your Spirit upon this bread and cup, Christ's body and blood,
the food that gives us the strength to persist until joy appears.
Send your Spirit upon us and fortify us to be your body, too, a
wellspring of hope for a world in need.

Communion Music

Lamb of God ELW 146, Setting 3

Create in Me a Clean Heart ELW 185

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Were You There ELW 353

1 Were you there when
they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when
they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes
me to tremble, tremble,
tremble.
Were you there when
they crucified my Lord?

2 Were you there when
they nailed him to the
tree? Were you there
when they nailed him to
the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes
me to tremble, tremble,
tremble.
Were you there when
they nailed him to the
tree?

3 Were you there when they pierced him in the side? Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

4 Were you there when the sun refused to shine? Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

5 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Text: African American spiritual

Jesus, Remember Me ELW 616

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Prayer after Communion

Generous God,
at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.
As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,
now make us one loaf to feed the world;
in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life. **Amen.**

Blessing

Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed.

God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and ✝ give you peace. Amen.

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded ELW 351

- 1 O sacred head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed
down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory,
what bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.
- 2 How pale thou art with anguish,
with sore abuse and scorn;
how does thy face now
languish,
which once was bright as morn!
Thy grief and bitter passion
were all for sinners' gain;
mine, mine was the
transgression,
but thine the deadly pain.

- 3 What language shall I borrow
to thank thee, dearest friend,
for this thy dying sorrow,
thy pity without end?
Oh, make me thine forever,
and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love to thee.
- 4 Lord, be my consolation;
shield me when I must die;
remind me of thy passion
when my last hour draws nigh.
These eyes, new faith receiving,
from thee shall never move;
for all who die believing
die safely in thy love.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676,
based on Arnulf of Louvain, d.
1250; tr. composite

Invitation for Serving All People

Go in peace. Share your bread. Pour out your perfume. Fill the land with awe and wonder!

Thanks be to God.

