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Preacher: David Bena

[0:00] Lord God, grant us repentance and wisdom on this most holy day. In Jesus name we pray. ! Jungle. Some of you went through jungle survival school where we learned what a jungle is. And a jungle is basically a gaggle. It's a twisted number of agendas trying to survive. In the jungle there are various animals and reptiles and insects and plants and trees all climbing on top of each other. Each with their agenda to survive. It's not a good place for a human being to be planted, surprisingly. Because he may find that he or she is no longer at the top of the food chain. Well, this is a bit like what Jesus encountered when he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, on the foal of a donkey.

[1:31] You know, when he rode in, I mean, we kind of glorify it. We marched around the church with our palms. When you really think about what was going on when he rode in, there was a tangled web of agendas.

And there were various groups, which we often think about, but we don't really get what was going on on that Palm Sunday. First of all, there were the Sadducees, weren't you? Weren't they? They were the religious leaders. They were the establishment. They were the wealthy group. They had formed an alliance with the Roman government.

And they didn't want anything to disturb the status quo. They were not happy with Jesus coming in because he was disturbing the status quo.

They did not like the parade. Then there was a second group, which we have learned about, called the Pharisees. They were the religious leaders.

[2:43] We might say more like legalists. They were the ones that helped establish those 1619 rules to protect the Ten Commandments.

They were not happy with Jesus. Jesus really let them know they were being legalists. Do you like anyone telling you you're a legalist?

They did not want this parade. They did not want Jesus hanging around. Then there were the scribes. Now, scribes were a little bit like religious attorneys, lawyers.

They interpreted the law. They didn't like Jesus coming in. They didn't like Jesus at all because he didn't interpret the law the way they did. They thought they were the final authority on interpretation of the law.

They wanted him out of there. And then, of course, there were the zealots. The zealots wanted to get rid of the Roman government and prop up a new Israel, a world power.

[3:52] They were waiting for a Messiah, a military leader, to bring that to pass. Jesus on a donkey? No way.

They were not happy with the parade. Then there was the Roman occupational government. They were like the Sadducees. They did not want anyone causing a ruckus.

Jesus caused a ruckus. They were watching him closely. Then there was what we call the Amharets, people of the land.

That was most of the people in the parade with the palms. It's us. Normal, everyday people trying to raise their families, trying to live in harmony, go to work.

They didn't get involved with the establishment. They stayed away from the establishment. They just wanted to live their life. Jesus was meeting their needs.

[4:58] They were in the parade. Maybe this really is the Messiah. They were excited. Then there were Jesus' disciples. They initiated the palms being thrown and the cloaks.

They really wanted to do whatever Jesus told them to do. Well, mostly. Kind of like those of us who are members of the church. We sort of want to...

Well, okay, so we won't go there. All right. And then finally, there was Jesus. Jesus, the Grand Marshal of the parade.

You know, he set that parade up, right? He set his disciples to get the donkey, the colt. He was seriously forming this parade.

Why? Well, we get one hint as he's now, for the first time, advertising his Messiahship.

[6:05] From Old Testament prophecy, Zechariah 9, it says, Behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and carrying salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Jesus was presenting a direct challenge against the religious establishment, against all the agendas coming at him.

He was forcing a reaction. You ever think about that? By riding into town, he was forcing the issue. For the first time, you might say he knew that his time had come.

So the religious establishment saying, Messiah, this is the Messiah. He's a carpenter. He's on a donkey. We don't need him. Thank you for my accent.

And so, they wanted to stop it. The object of the parade was to establish Jesus as a Messiah, not a military leader.

[7:27] He didn't come in on a war horse or a camel. The leader that brings peace. The leader that brings salvation. You know, in last week's gospel lesson, we read Jesus saying, And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, on a cross, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

Jesus said this to show what kind of death he was going to die. And Peter and Paul elaborate on this years later.

Paul said in Romans, For God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And Peter says in 1 Peter 3, Christ suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

What does Christ mean? Messiah. He was the Messiah coming in to save us. And here's where it gets personal.

He died directly for you and for me. You know, in a little bit we'll have communion and we'll say in like manner, Jesus took the cup and said, This is my blood of the new covenant.

[9:00] Communion is to remind us weekly that Jesus brings a new covenant for us. Salvation.

That's why we have communion every week. Because we forget things. You know, at many activities, people start with the Pledge of Allegiance.

We say it over and over and over again. And sporting events up until recently, we sang the Star Spangled Banner. Well, it's not just to spend time.

It's to remind us who we are as Americans. Well, even more important, the communion reminds us as to who we are and what Christ did for us.

When I went into the armed forces, I got a church service cross. It was a cross with a circle around it. Put it on with my dog tags. And it said very simply, For thee, Christ died.

[10:02] Isn't that a neat thing? Reminding me who I was and who Jesus is. So I want to ask you a penetrating question.

What's your agenda? What is your agenda? What's your agenda in the jungle we called Earth today?

Or even, what's your agenda in the jungle we call Syracuse? What's your agenda in the jungle we call Church of the Holy Trinity?

What's my agenda? You know, as we go through life, our agendas sometimes change. For a while, our agenda may be success no matter the cost.

Or at other times, pleasure no matter the cost. Which usually brings addiction. Or it could be looking good in all situations.

[11:11] That's probably a real good American agenda. Or is it one scuffle after another to prove I'm right? Could it be abuse others and systems just like I was abused?

Is it your agenda, I'm going to rebel against people and systems because that helps me be the real me? If I'm ouching anybody here, these are all agendas I have had and some I still have.

One is care for yourself because nobody else will. Now we get to a little different kind of agenda.

Care for others as best you can. Love Jesus as best you can. And if you're like me, it's a mix of all these agendas.

And so it's called a tangle, a web of agendas. Within my head, within our church, within our community, basic agendas for survival.

[12:32] just like that first Palm Sunday. And so like Jesus' parade into Jerusalem, we march on. So here's my challenge for you as a conclusion. This week presents a wonderful opportunity to walk with Jesus in that final week. You know, there are four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. How did June get in there? There are four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And this week there's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. So as a grandfather, little kids yelling, do not bother me at all. I just keep on rolling. Okay. Monday, read the Gospel of Matthew, the section on the Passion. Tuesday, Mark. Wednesday, Luke. Thursday, John. [13:34] Pray through that. Pray through each Gospel Passion narrative. Walk with Jesus. Pray each day. If you have a prayer book, you can actually look in the back under the collection of prayers, and there's a prayer for every day of the week, Holy Week. Use that prayer. If you don't have a prayer book, no problem. Pray through the Scripture as to what you're seeing Jesus do that day and what it has to do with you. which agenda do you want God to enhance? Which agenda do you want God to help you kill? Which agenda do you see helping nail Jesus to the cross? Let us just come clean with God and let Him have His wonderful way with us. Take the Holy Week walk. Let us pray. Lord God, in this long worship service, we could get discouraged. Sometimes we need to be discouraged, Lord, in order to get to the real problem. [14:50] Us. We give ourselves to you this week, Lord, that you can do something wonderful in our lives as we do something wonderful for you. We pray this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Thank you.