

# Palm Sunday

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[ 0 : 00 ] And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and the multitudes that followed cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David.

Words from this morning's Gospel, St. Matthew, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Five days. What can happen in someone's life in five days?

As we heard in the lesson from St. Matthew 21, a great multitude of visitors were in Jerusalem, because the Passover was just days away, and they had come to prepare for the festivities. But even if there had not been so many visitors in the city on that day, it would not have mattered. For if the people had not shouted out, Hosanna, the rocks themselves would have done so. Such was the celebration on that first Palm Sunday. Only the most hardened, or most ignorant, were not caught up in it.

[ 1 : 06 ] But that was the first day. As we heard in the Passion Gospel, over the next five days, the celebratory air would change drastically to the stench of suffering and death.

It would first change to indignation as Jesus cleansed the temple of those who turned God's house of prayer into a house of merchandise. It would then change to introspection when Jesus challenged the Jewish religious leaders in one final series of theological debates.

It changed the third time to an evening of servitude and solemnity, when Jesus washed the feet of and shared the Last Supper, the institution of the Holy Eucharist, with his apostles.

It again changed to betrayal, as Judas first made his deal with the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver, and later delivered Jesus to them with a kiss.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, it turned into a time of agonizing prayer for Jesus, and of sleep, and then turmoil, terror, and flight for the apostles, as Jesus was taken captive and led away for trial.

[ 2 : 24 ] And first in the house of the high priest, and afterwards, at Galatah, the house of judgment, where Pilate presided. It turned into trials filled with false testimony and unjust judgments.

The guilty Barabbas was set free, and the innocent Jesus sentenced to death. Given the chance to set the King of Righteousness free, the same crowd, who five days earlier shouted, Hosanna, cried out, crucify him.

It had only been five days. Ultimately, it turned into passion and death, as Jesus' flesh was torn from his body by a flagrum.

His scalp was pierced with a crown of thorns, and he was made to carry a rough and heavy cross, which he was nailed to in the cruelest means of execution ever known to man, crucifixion.

All this occurred within five days. Just five days. Today, we celebrate Palm Sunday.

[ 3 : 40 ] While the summit of Lent's Solemnity Holy Week is only beginning, 2,000 plus years removed from the first Palm Sunday, we know the outcome. We know that next Sunday is Easter.

And on that day, the sense of joy that is only welling within us today will break through as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. But what about these next five days?

We don't know their outcome. What will occur in our lives over them? How will we spend this week? What will we be doing on each of these upcoming days? Will the cry of Hosanna continue to ring in our ears? Will it ring in our hearts?

Or will we become indignant like the money changers? Will we debate with Jesus like the scribes and Pharisees? Betray Jesus like Judas? Run from Jesus like the apostles?

[ 4 : 42 ] Deny him as St. Peter did? Will Jesus be mocked and crucified afresh in our minds and hearts? Because we give in to fear instead of standing firm upon the faith.

Will we want to draw closer to Jesus? Will we be unwilling to do so? It's just so much easier to get lost in television and in our phones than it is to pray and to read and meditate upon the scriptures.

Will we slide into lax living and in essence nail Jesus to the cross anew? Will we live in the Bible? Will we live in the Bible? What will we do over these next five days?

How will we live them? More importantly, how will we live our lives after them, after Easter? These next five days might determine the answer.

As we have seen, a lot can happen in a mere five days. These next five days could be pivotal to our Christian lives.

[ 5 : 52 ] We can more firmly take hold of God's grace and deeply enter into the Paschal mystery. We can further shake off the bonds of sin, fix our eyes more firmly upon Jesus, and take up our cross, determined to follow him no matter how uncomfortable it becomes or what we might lose.

We can die to ourselves a little more each day and live more for Christ. Doing this will come with some pain. Old attitudes and habits die hard.

But it has to be that way. The way of the cross is not comfortable. It certainly wasn't for Jesus. And the servant is no better than his master.

At best, we can hope to be as our master, to imitate him, to follow him. We know what the Palm Sunday crowd in Jerusalem did in five days.

What will you and I do? Let us not allow this week to be just another week. If you will not be at the services here at St. Philip's during the week, at minimum, please take the time to read the Passion Gospels appointed for each day in the prayer book.

[ 7 : 12 ] Let us ask, Lord. Let us meditate on them and ask, what will change in my life because of this? Let us ask the Holy Spirit what needs to change and be willing to obey.

Let us use these days to draw closer to Christ, take up whatever cross we are called upon to bear, and follow him. Let us pray. My brothers and sisters, a lot can happen in one's life in five days.

What will happen in ours in these next five? In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.