

Palm Sunday

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 00] Every year on Palm Sunday, you hear a sermon that speaks of our Lord riding on a donkey, approaching Jerusalem.

The people of Israel enthusiastically cheer, proclaiming, Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.

The praise from the people of Israel was due to their belief that this Jesus was their long-awaited Messiah. They believed that Jesus had come to save them, not from their sinful and selfish ways, no.

They believed that Jesus had come to now deliver them from their enemies. Jesus was seen as the new Moses, who would lead the children of Israel out of their bondage, out of their captivity.

This time, however, it would not be from the hand of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. It would be from those occupiers, those oppressors, the Roman Empire.

[1 : 14] Therefore, Jesus was viewed by the people as a new Moses, the one who would deliver Israel and rule the nations from the heart of Jerusalem.

And every year, we are reminded that when the people's hopes are dashed, when they come to realize that Jesus is claiming to be more than a new Moses or some nationalistic savior, many of these same people turn their praises into shouts of pure hatred.

And in less than a week, the mob is chanting, crucify, crucify him. Therefore, Palm Sunday is a somber celebration as we begin making our way to the cross.

Oh, how quickly popular opinion changes. The crowds wanted a leader who would make their lives better. They wanted a champion of their own cause.

But what was not on their minds was the need of a savior to save them from themselves. They did not grasp the real reason of why our Lord came to this earth.

[2 : 39] Jesus came to offer his own life as a sacrifice for them. He came to be the sinless sacrifice for all of us, wayward sinners.

You see, we all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to our own way. We are creatures of self-preservation, always looking out for our own self-interest.

And our Lord calls us to repent of such selfishness, to find our way back to him. It is through our Lord's agony and bloody sweat.

It is by his cross and passion. It is through his glorious resurrection and ascension that he delivers us. Friends, it is not Uncle Sam who saves us.

It is not some political party or leader or some guru that saves us. It is only Jesus.

[3 : 51] And Jesus alone who can save. Jesus came not to be some revolutionary leader who promises to make our lives easier.

He came to sacrifice his own life so that those who repent, those who repent of their sins and put their trust in him, such people might have eternal life and salvation.

Friends, Jesus is the antidote to our selfishness. Because he is the sacrificial lamb.

He is the chief shepherd of our souls. You and I are no different than the cheering crowds on Palm Sunday. We want a God who will make our lives better.

We often look to our political leaders or to the state to give us what we need. But Jesus does not offer us lower inflation, lower gas prices, and an easy life.

[5 : 04] He offers us something much more. He offers us eternal communion with himself as we confess our faults and as we repent of our own self-centered and sinful ways.

And our only hope, our only salvation, is found in the king who came to this earth in order to lay down his life for his servants.

All of you. Jesus did not come to the healthy, wealthy, and wise. He came to all who acknowledge their faults and acknowledge their brokenness.

And to all who look to the cross of Christ, such people shall find life and love for all eternity. Friends, we now enter into that most holy, holy of time, holy week, beginning with the pomp of the palms. But our destination is the cross where our Savior died. And he died so that we might live.

[6 : 22] Therefore, may we bow our heads and worship of our humble king as we make our way with him to Jerusalem, where his love is seen as he was nailed to a tree.

In the words of that great hymn, ride on, ride on in majesty, and lowly pomp, ride on to die.

Bow thy meek head to mortal pain. Then take, O God, thy power and reign. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.