

Palm Sunday 2008

LESSON: Joy Amidst Suffering - The Paradox of Palm Sunday

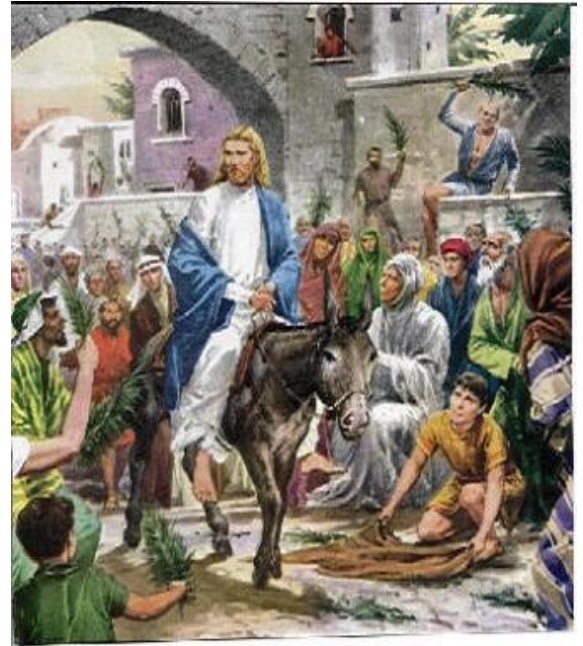
Today we are in the middle of a **paradox**.

On the one hand, we are filled with **joy**.

- ✍ As Jesus enters Jerusalem, **throng**s of people rejoice.
- ✍ The promised Savior has finally come! The Messiah is here! Redemption is at hand!

But then, on the **other** hand, we turn towards the **sorrowful narrative** of our Lord's rejection, suffering, and death - with his **passion**.

- ✍ **Palm** Sunday is also **Passion** Sunday.
- ✍ It is a solemn, silent moment.



How can a day of **triumph** be filled with both joy **and** sorrow? Because what **seems** to be Christ's **defeat** is actually his **victory**, the victory of **everlasting love**.

- ✍ "A man can have no greater love than **to lay down his life** for his friends" (John 15:13).
- ✍ That's what Jesus **taught**, and that's what he **did** in his passion, to prove **beyond the shadow of a doubt** that his love for us has **no limits**.
- ✍ The angels sang "Glory to God in the Highest" when Jesus was born in **Bethlehem**, and now the people sing, "Hosanna in the Highest" as Jesus enters **Jerusalem**.



Both entrances were motivated by God's love, the **same love** that led him to be **obedient** to the Father even to the point of **death**,

- ✍ so as to **reverse** the disobedience of Adam,
- ✍ **pay** the price of our sins,
- ✍ and **rescue** fallen mankind from hopelessness and injustice.

We have solved our paradox.

- ✍ The source of our **sorrow** is **sin**, our sins, the **cause** of Christ's suffering.
- ✍ But the source of our **joy** is Christ's **love**, the very reason Jesus was **willing** to suffer, and the very **power** that, through his sacrifice on the cross, **conquers** our sins.

And so Christians can **always** live inside the **paradox** of Palm Sunday, can always find **joy, the joy of Christ's limitless love**, even amidst the **profoundest** sorrows.

APPLICATION: Participating in the Liturgy

Today is the beginning of the **holiest week** of the year, the week we call **Holy Week**.

- ✍ During the **first** Holy Week, two thousand years ago, Jesus achieved **victory** over sin and evil.
- ✍ During **this** Holy Week, he wants to **extend** that victory into **our lives**, into the parts of our lives that still **need** it, that still haven't learned how to live the paradox of Palm Sunday.



He wants to come into our hearts this Holy Week in the same way he came into Jerusalem

- ✍ **humbly and peacefully**, riding on a donkey colt,
- ✍ surrounded by the crowd who acclaimed him as the “Son of David – Hosanna!”
- ✍ but then quickly turned and yelled, “crucify him!”

Perhaps today, as we hear the passion proclaimed, we might ask ourselves:

- ✍ Do I go with the crowd – so fickle, going along whichever way the wind blows?
- ✍ Or do I go with Christ to the Cross – were we find Grace and Life?
- ✍ The **liturgical celebrations** of this coming week, as beautiful as they are, will only be a **dim shadow** of the true glory of Christ that they represent
- ✍ But the liturgy is also a **dependable** vehicle and Jesus will be **truly present** in them.

We just have to **open the gates** in the **walls** around our hearts.

- ✍ And we can do that by **making this week different**:
- ✍ by turning off the radio and television more often than usual,
- ✍ by spending more time in **prayer** than **online**,
- ✍ and, most importantly, by making our own **sacrifice**, so **precious** in God's eyes: the sacrifice of **our time**.



It takes **time** to join this family of believers for this week's liturgies, praying, worshipping, contemplating, receiving the sacraments, **discovering what God has to say** to us this Holy Week – allowing Christ's victory into our lives.

Jesus **knows** what he wants to say to **each one** of us this week, the holiest week of the year.

Let's give him our **time and attention**, because whatever it is he wants to tell us, it will be **exactly** what we **most need** to hear.

