



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

Today is one of those problematic Sundays...there is too much going on! Today, in modern liturgical calendars, is *Palm/Passion Sunday*. And so what is a beloved moment from many of our childhoods gets passed over with too little attention. The palms are processed and waved – and we at once move on.

We might want to blame our modern world for that. Because we no longer think we have time to attend worship every evening of Holy Week, we try to condense the whole passion story – which takes nearly half of John's gospel, and large portions of the other three – into a half hour of Sunday's service. Once, Christians spent the whole week building up to Good Friday and the last moments at the cross. *The daily readings this week attempt to lead us through that progression.*

And so we arrive at this final word: "Father, into your hands..." Of all the lessons Jesus has to teach us, this is the richest. And the hardest.

Oh, we affirm it in a hundred ways. We sing "This is my Father's world" but we go about as if the world is our private domain, to shape and use as we wish. We pray "forgive as we forgive others" but hang on to grudges and hurts to the grave. We teach love for all God's children, then choose which ones we do not consider to be God's creatures. We expect modern medicine to keep us alive until they find the cure for whatever ails us. We do not really give ourselves into God's hands.

The final words of Jesus take us into another Kingdom...one where we no longer need to control our world, because life is in a better hand.

— Dr. John Clifford, Retired Clergy-in-Residence

A Family Affair

The Family Affair has been focusing on the events of the week prior to Easter, which we call Holy Week. Each of these events can be visited "live" with your family at Resurrection Celebration April 9th, from 9:30 to 11:30, which is TODAY!

Read together Matthew 27:27-36, 46-50. It is finished. The darkest day in history occurred on Good Friday. The soldiers took Jesus before Pontius Pilate, who gave the order for him to be crucified, to be put to death. On a hill between two criminals, Jesus died on a cross so that we could have eternal life.

Jesus' friends were sad about his death. Mary Magdalene stood at the bottom of the cross, feeling sad. The disciples were sad and upset. Talk with your family about what to do when you feel sad. Do you draw a picture? Do you get extra hugs?

Even though Good Friday is a sad time, we are reminded that when Jesus wipes away our sins, they are gone for good. Jesus died on the cross because he wanted us to live like him on earth and to have everlasting life in heaven. That's pretty amazing love!

Pray together: Dear Lord, we thank you and praise you for your Son, Jesus. We are thankful that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. We are thankful that Jesus is a light in our lives. Amen.

— Tammy Parks, Elementary Coordinator

Sunday: Luke 19:28-40

Palm Sunday remains a special day for many of us. While we may keep the palms to burn into next year's ashes for Ash Wednesday, we still need to take time to welcome Jesus into our lives.

- How have we praised the Lord for the blessings we have received?

Monday: Matthew 5:1-16 (or 5:1-7:28)

One of the titles we give Jesus is "Teacher" and much of his ministry consists of teaching, largely through parables. In the Sermon on the Mount we find a condensed version of much of his teaching. This is what we are invited to live up to.

- As we review these lessons, which of them do we find hardest to put into practice ourselves?

Tuesday: Luke 19:41-20:19

During his last days, Jesus is in Jerusalem, and we find controversy building up around him. The leaders of Jerusalem did not want to hear what he had to say, and seem to have sought to defend their own positions of power and authority. Things don't seem to have changed a great deal today!

- How do we respond when someone refuses to hear our opinions and consider them? How do we hear what others say when we disagree with what they say? How do we use our power and authority to get our own way?

Wednesday: John 13:1-38

One of the saddest moments in life is when a friend lets us down or even turns against us. Judas is the "poster child" of this; yet all the disciples fail Jesus on this week.

- How have we failed those we love?
- Are there those we need to forgive for failing us as well?

Thursday: Luke 22:7-30

One of the aspects of the Passover we often overlook is that this is a celebration with the whole family. The entire extended family participates. Jesus' "family" (his disciples) gathers as he reframes the historic questions and answers of Passover.

- Do we make occasions for the whole family to gather?
- Do we share any meals together? Do we make memories in those moments?

Friday: Luke 22:39-23:56

This is a long reading! For the disciples, this is a tragic day of hopelessness and loss. They observe powers at work which seem to be too powerful to resist. There seems to be nothing anyone can do to save their dreams of God's Kingdom.

- How do we react today to displays of "the powers of the world"?
- Do we – can we – maintain hope and trust that we can still work for God's Kingdom on earth?

Saturday:

Traditionally, Holy Saturday was a bleak day, with none of the singing in worship, no crosses on the altar, and fasting through the day. It was the day when new converts were finally taught the creeds and made ready for their baptism. And then with a vigil through the night, Christians prepared for the miracle of Easter, with readings from Genesis through Revelation.

- Reflect on the last 40 days. How have you been observing this Lenten season: with prayer, fasting, worship? Has it made any impact on your life at all? Are you ready for Easter?