

## Sermon for April 13th, 2014

### Palm Sunday, Matthew 27:11-54

BLESSINGS TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD THE FATHER, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Well here we have it. The **time** we have been waiting for. For the **last 40 days** we have spent our time in the season of Lent. On **Sunday** mornings we have heard how our lives are '*Restored in Christ*', on **Wednesday** evenings at our soup suppers we have heard readings from the psalms—readings with a mixture of being **assured** that the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, to **laments** over how long will the Lord will hide His face from us as well as nearly losing our foothold, to **singing joyfully** to the Lord, to even **being reminded** that even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death the Lord will be with us.

**All of this** has brought us to this morning. Palm Sunday, a day that **traditionally** up until a number of years ago, was **only about** Jesus **triumphantly** riding into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey—which is a **fulfillment** of the words of the prophet Zechariah. But **today** we hear **two sides** of Jesus' journey which began a number of months ago when He first set His face toward Jerusalem and an inevitable death.

This **festive procession** was the beginning of the end for Jesus. The **excitement** of Jesus' entry into the city to shouts of '*Hosanna*' '*Blessed is the one*

*who comes in the name of the Lord.* 'Hosanna to the highest heaven.' The shouts of acclamation and praise soon turned into shouts of ridicule and taunting.

**How did this happen? Why did it turn so ugly in the course of a few days?** During the days between Palm Sunday and Jesus' crucifixion the **Last Supper** took place, **two** of Jesus' trusted disciples **betrayed** Him, Jesus was **arrested**, the **powers that be**, Caiaphas the chief priest and the Sanhedrin accused Jesus of **blasphemy**, Pontius **Pilate**, the one whose primary job was to keep the peace, was the one who **ultimately handed Jesus over** to be crucified. Then, there was the prisoner the people wanted to be released instead of Jesus. His name was '**Jesus Barabbas**' which *ironically* means '**Jesus, Son of the Father**'. From then on the story really goes downhill. You **heard it**, you **know the rest**. But why?? Why did this have to happen??

You see, Jesus did not see that his **purpose** on earth was to suffer and die. For him, his **purpose** on earth was to proclaim that the Kingdom of God had come near. Faced with the **choice** of being loyal to God or suffering Rome's torture and punishment—Jesus **chose God** no matter **what** the cost.

The prophet Isaiah wrote of the servant's **humiliation and vindication**,  
*"The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backwards. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God*

*helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, the one who vindicates me is near. It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.”*

Palm Sunday marked the **beginning of the end** for Jesus. This ending **paved the way** for our **own** beginning. In a very real sense Jesus' death marked the **end of a world without hope** and the **beginning of a new age** of God's Spirit among us. The Kingdom of God **has** come near.

**PLEASE**, come join us for our worship services this week **to see and hear** the **rest of the story** of what happens between today and Easter morning. **IT IS ALL TRULY FOR THE GLORY OF GOD. AMEN**