

3/16/08

THE INVOCATION AND THE PSALM **Psalm 118:22-27**

Lay Minister: 22 The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;

People: 23 the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Lay Minister: 24 This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

People: 25 O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success.

Lay Minister: 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.

People: 27 The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.

Lay Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit + be with you all.

People: And with your spirit.

Lay Minister: Let us listen to the Gospel for Palm Sunday.

THE PALM SUNDAY GOSPEL **John 12:12-19** **page**

(Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey.)

12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!"

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, 15 "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."

16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

People: Most merciful God, as the people of Jerusalem, with palms in their hands, gathered to greet Your dearly beloved Son when He came into His Holy City, grant that we may ever hail Him as our King and, when He comes again, may go forth to meet Him with trusting and steadfast hearts and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON **Isaiah 50:4-9** **page**

(The Servant of God suffers for God's people.)

4 The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one

being taught. 5 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. 6 I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. 7 Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. 8 He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! 9 It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who is he that will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up.

THE EPISTLE LESSON

Philippians 2:5-11

page

(Jesus humbled Himself. The heavenly Father exalts Jesus)

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THE PASSION GOSPEL

Matthew 27:11-54

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(Jesus dies on the cross for the sins of the world.)

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. 12 When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer.

13 Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" 14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge-- to the great amazement of the governor.

15 Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him. 19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him." 20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

21 "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered.

22 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"

23 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

25 All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him

over to be crucified. 27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

32 As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. 33 They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). 34 There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. 35 When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 36 And sitting down, they kept watch over him there.

37 Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 42 "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

44 In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

45 From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. 46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"-- which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." 48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49 The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him." 50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. 52 The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. 54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of the World.

People: **“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5) THANKS BE TO GOD!**

(Jesus humbled Himself. The heavenly Father exalts Jesus)

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In the Summer 1992, after school, I went with two college friends to South Dakota. Bob Heinert and Ron Eggleston and I went to the farm and ranch owned by Bob's family. It was Spring and one day it was time to brand the calves and put the rest of the cattle out to pasture for the summer. Now, I was a city boy who had never done a job like this before, but I tried. I helped with the branding until there was only one calf left. We chased it, and when I got close I ran for it across the corral. The only problem was I ran right through a pile of manure in the middle of the corral, my feet got stuck, and I fell face down in the manure. Talk about dirty, and smelly. What job do you hate the worst?

I. We all have chores, work, calls from God, that are difficult, and we don't enjoy, and sometimes because we don't enjoy, jobs we don't do.

A. Maybe you can think of some of the jobs you hate.

1. The job I really hated was trimming the yard after I mowed the lawn. Do you remember those tools that looked like scissors, and you used to trim around a tree or house? We didn't have a weed eater or string trimmer in those days. It took a long time on your knees to get the grass trimmed around the house, around the fence, around the trees. A lot of time when I mowed the yard the trimming didn't get done.

2. How about today, which jobs do you dislike? Which don't get done?

A. How about washing the dishes? Painting the house? Cleaning the cat litter box?

B. How about cleaning the house, or paying the bills, or doing taxes?

3. Do those jobs get done?

B. Now, those jobs I mentioned are actually small. How are you on the jobs God has called us to?

1. When you have an opportunity to witness, does the witness happen?

2. If someone hurts you, are you willing to forgive? Or, perhaps harder, if you hurt someone, can you apologize?

3. How are you at serving those in need or helping the poor? Do you have time for a person grieving, or in trouble?

4. When faced with a law of God, or a law of man, do you obey? Or, do you have a better idea?

C. When faced with the call of God, calls that are difficult, that demand commitment, and resources, and time, do you do these jobs willingly, or does God's work lack for getting done?

II. Now consider a thankless job. What if you were part of a family that owned a big farm and your family was well off. You had servants on the farm who had gone into town and gotten in trouble. Your dad wanted you to leave home, and go to town, and spend time in jail for your servants, so they could get out. No one would want that job. That's one of the jobs that might not get done.

A. Yet, that is what our Savior willingly did for us.

1. Listen again to Philippians 2.

2. **5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!**

B. If there was ever an undesirable job, it was leaving a heavenly home for a dirty earthly job, a job that took sacrifice, and was for people who had rebelled, for people who might not even accept the gift that would be given.

1. Jesus, the creator of all, the maker and giver of the law became obedient, obedient to death, to death on the cross.

2. That job did not go undone.

3. Jesus did the difficult, the undesirable job for us, so we could have life.

C. That is why Jesus, the son of God came to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and why he died on the cross as we heard today. As Isaiah says, **“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)**

III. Did you hear the call to us? **5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:**

A. Jesus took on sacrificial servant hood for us, and he calls us to servant hood.

1. Maybe that means confessing your sins, or forgiving someone.

2. Maybe that means giving some time at church, or in the community.

3. Maybe that means sharing Jesus with others.

4. **5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:**

B. Often these are jobs that we don't want to do, but when we see what Jesus has done for us, can we not respond with thanks? When we look at the Good Friday love of Jesus, can we turn our backs?

CONCLUSION - Remember my fall in the corral? It was messy and smelly. Do you know, I have recently seen someone put their hands in that messy smelly stuff on purpose? I'm a new grandfather, and we have a new baby in the family. My Son, and daughter in law, and my wife, and I love that new baby. I've seen people change those diapers willingly. I've seen more than one person willing to serve in this way, because of love.

Jesus has loved you in a way you can't imagine? Do you love Him? Will you serve Him?