

Palm Sunday Scriptures and Study for April 5, 2020

This is week three of our at home Church and study. As we think about Palm Sunday, we have to remember Jesus had been teaching and ministering to people for just over three years and now he had started his journey toward Jerusalem. I took my Chronological Bible and looked at some of the things Jesus was doing on his way to the cross. I will share a few of them as we make our way to Palm Sunday or what would have been the tenth day of the Hebrew month of Nisan. The day of Passover took place on the fifteenth day of Nisan. The Tenth of Nisan was the day that the perfect lamb was chosen and taken to the house that would, on Passover, offer it up.

This Sunday would also be Communion Sunday. However, we will not celebrate communion until we come back together to worship in the Sanctuary. We have been asked by our District Superintendent, George Price, not to cheapen or change a sacred ceremony of the church. I agree with him, and want us to be ready and hungry to return to worship, to take communion and fellowship in Christ. Now, let's start with prayer.

1) Start with prayer (Use your own words or use these to help you get started)

Holy Spirit we invite you to be with us this morning and we need you to guide us as we worship and have church here this morning. We ask for the Wind of Spirit to blow over our nation to turn our attention towards the things of God and to bring about repentance. We ask for the Fire of the Holy Spirit to do to us what was done to Isaiah when his lips were touch by the burning coal. Burn away our sin, for we are a people of unclean lips, unclean thoughts, unclean hands and feet. Sanctify us for your glory, purpose and pleasure Father.

Remind us Holy Spirit that we are crucified with Christ and no longer live but Christ lives in us. This life we live in our body, we live by faith in the Son of God, who loves us and gave himself for us. Thank you Jesus! Today we need a King and a Savior. We give thanks and praise because we have One! Christ the Messiah, is our King of kings and Lord or lords. Amen.

2) Listen to a favorite Christian hymn or song. For those of you who are musically inclined, you can sing yours. Our traditional hymn would be Hosanna, Loud Hosanna or All Glory, Laud and Honor.

3) Follow this with the tithes/offerings

(Note to the church: Thank you so much for your faithfulness in your tithes and offerings in March)

4) Psalter Reading Psalm 118:13-29 (Read from your Bible)

5) Scripture Reading: Zechariah 9:9 (NIV)

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

6) Once again, the Theme for the morning is **"Press In."** Before reading scripture pray again, asking the Holy Spirit to open your hearts and minds and reveal God's truths from the Word to you this morning.

Jesus is headed to Jerusalem, pressing in closer and closer to his destiny. It is Palm Sunday. Before we discuss Palm Sunday let's take a look at some of the things Jesus did on his way to Jerusalem.

- For the third time, Jesus told his disciples what was going to happen to him in Jerusalem: **Luke 18:31-33 (NIV)** ³¹ *Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. ³³ On the third day he will rise again."*
- Jesus and his disciples pass through the city of Jericho on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus who "Pressed In" to encounter Jesus: **Mark 10:46-52 (NIV)** ⁴⁶ *Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." ⁵² "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.*

- Bartimaeus was reduced to being a beggar because of his blindness. His very survival was dependent on the compassion of others. However, he too had heard of Jesus. Notice it was Jesus of Nazareth. What did the blind man do? Shouted!
 - “Son of David, have mercy on me!”
Jesus did have mercy on him and healed him.
 - The world was telling the blind man to “shup up” but he was having none of that. Again, he “Pressed In” even more. A lesson here for us to remember is that the crowd’s voice is often wrong.
 - It must have been by spiritual revelation that Bartimaeus knew Jesus was the “Son of David,” which would have meant that he knew the Messiah would come from the line of King David. God had a purpose in the encounter.
 - After Bartimaeus received his sight, he followed Jesus.
- In a sense, in our nation we have been blinded by the worldly things and by the enemy. Time for us to cry out as Bartimaeus did.
 - “Jesus of Nazareth, Son of David, have mercy on us.” We hear Your call this morning Lord to come to you. Open our eyes this morning to really see You and to really follow You. To be your disciples and messengers in this world. Amen.
- Also, as Jesus passed through Jericho he met a man that also pressed in to see him and was a picture of salvation in Christ. It was Zacchaeus. We have already discussed this story. Refer to last week’s study.

7) We pray for strength and renewal this morning using the Prayer of St. Patrick:

I arise today through God’s strength to pilot me:
 God’s might to uphold me,
 God’s wisdom to guide me,
 God’s eye to look before me,
 God’s ear to hear me,
 God’s word to speak for me,
 God’s hand to guard me.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise.

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

I arise today through mighty strength. Amen.

8) Now is a good time for a song/hymn or get some coffee or other refreshing drink. Stand just for minute or take a short break.

9) Read and discuss/reflect on the following: **Luke 19:28-38 (NIV)**

²⁸ After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,

³⁰ "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.

³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'"

³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them.

³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

³⁴ They replied, "The Lord needs it."

Jesus had just told the parable of the Ten Minas and then headed toward Jerusalem by way of Bethphage and Bethany. All four of the gospels tell this story of the Triumphal Entry which we celebrate as Palm Sunday. The first part of this story is amazing in the fact that the donkey (colt) Jesus asked the two disciples to go get was right where Jesus said and it happened just as he said it would.

When the disciples were questioned about taking the colt they said just what Jesus told them to say to the owners of the colt, "The Lord needs it." No questions asked after that. I want to be more like that in my response to God's Word and prompting of the Holy Spirit.

This story is also foreshadowed in the Old Testament in story of Abraham and the call to sacrifice his only Son, Isaac. You can find that in Genesis 22. You will find a donkey, wood, and replacement ram for the sacrifice.

³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it.

³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Crowds of people would have been on the road going down from the Mount of Olives to the Kidron Valley then back up to Jerusalem headed for the Passover. Jesus would have passed through Jericho and into the rugged Judea wilderness where he had fasted for forty days before being tempted by Satan. He could have stayed there and escaped the horrible death that awaited him. I am thankful he pressed on toward Jerusalem and the cross.

For the Jews, Passover was a religious observance and a celebration of their rescue from the slavery they experienced in Egypt. We too, have been freed from slavery to sin by Jesus. That's why we celebrate Easter. Contrary to the news reports, America will celebrate Easter, even if it is from our homes.

The Egypt experience by the Jews was a precursor to what Jesus would do for the world. So on this day, Palm Sunday, Jesus came to the people as the Lamb of God. You see, on that day Jesus enter Jerusalem, each Jewish family would have selected a "perfect lamb" to sacrifice the following Friday. Christians call that "Good Friday." Not so much for Jesus, but it was for the world.

The people would have also had to purchase their lamb for the sacrifice. Jesus was purchased by the priests of Israel, paying for the life of the Messiah.

Matthew 27:3 (NIV)

³ When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders.

The question that I want to think God was asking us is, "Here is my perfect Lamb. Will you choose Him? Will you receive Him? Everything in our lives hinges on how we answer those two questions. Join me now, in telling Jesus that you choose Him and receive Him, even if you have already done it.

Jesus said to Martha, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"* (John 11:25-26) That question is one that we have to answer every day of our lives, especially in dire times, like we are facing now.

Press In! Answer as Martha did, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." I encourage you to say this out loud to yourself, especially during your prayer times alone with God. But it is also what we need to be saying to the world right now. Remember, Martha said that during the loss of her brother Lazarus. She still believed.

As Jesus came riding on the colt the people and disciples began to throw their cloaks on the road ahead of Jesus and began to joyfully praise God. Loudly, they proclaimed the miracles they had seen Jesus perform. They also proclaimed, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Another question we all have to ask on Palm Sunday is who is our King? Who are we living for? The Bible clearly teaches that we will serve one of two rulers. ***Ephesians 2:1-2 (NIV)*** ¹ *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,* ² *in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

Obviously, Paul is talking about Satan and at one time or another we have been under his rule. Anytime we live for ourselves, rebel against God's ways or Word, by willful sin we are serving the wrong ruler. If you are there now, Jesus has made a way out of that bondage. Today, this Palm Sunday, let's proclaim together from our houses, Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords again and again. He is the One we will serve.

Even though the crowd honored Jesus as the king who came in the name of the Lord, they were not ready for the kind of King he would be. They wanted a king that would wield a sword and take down the Roman Empire. They got a King that was the Messiah, whose words were his Sword and he would take down the power of sin and evil by his love for us which was demonstrated by his willingness to go to Jerusalem to be put on a cross.

Read together **1 John 4:9-10 (NIV)**

⁹ *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.*

¹⁰ *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

Lord, Jesus live through us that the world would see you in us. Amen.

10) Prayer Concerns: Karen Martin, Ann Keefer, Judy Draper, Brenda Stam, Ellis Hise, Jana Ledbetter, those suffering from the effects of the coronavirus, our nations' leaders, and that the church would rise up in revival and be used powerfully by God to bring salvation and healing to our land.

11) End with **The Lord's Prayer** and prayer for others/nation and a hymn or song. Here is my prayer using Psalm 116. My prayer is in italics. Use it if it is helpful for you today and this week.

Psalm 116:1-19 (NIV)

¹ I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. *Lord we love you and thank you for hearing our cry for help and mercy.*

² Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. *We call on you now and forever because we know you hear our prayers.*

³ The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. *Lord, we are overcome with trouble right now, the cords of death entangle us and the anguish and sorrow of the grave has gripped our county and world.*

⁴ Then I called on the name of the LORD: "O LORD, save me!" *We call on the name of the LORD, save us!*

⁵ The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. *LORD you are gracious and righteous and we see that especially in the cross. You are full of compassion and we need your compassion now. Particularly for those who have lost their jobs, lost loved ones and those who are on the frontlines of the coronavirus battle.*

⁶ The LORD protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved

me. *LORD thank you for protecting us even when we don't have right thoughts or desires. Thank you for grace. Thank you for meeting our greatest need, salvation through your Son, Jesus.*

⁷ Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. *Jesus, you are the one that brings us peace and rest. Thank you for your goodness to us. Let us show your goodness to others that need it right now.*

⁸ For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, ⁹ that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. *For you, O LORD, have saved our soul from eternal death by the blood of Jesus, taking away our sin and shame that we may walk with you forever in eternity. All praise and glory be to God.*

¹⁰ I believed; therefore I said, "I am greatly afflicted." *We put our faith in you Lord Jesus and you tell us to come to you if we are weary or loaded down with worries. Here we are!*

¹¹ And in my dismay I said, "All men are liars." *In our distress, we can't turn to men, for they do not have the answer. We turn our eye to you Lord.*

¹² How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? *You have showed us your goodness Father by your love for us through the death and resurrection of your Son. How are we to respond?*

¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. *Even though today we can't share in our traditional time of communion Lord, in our minds eye we respond to your goodness by lifting up the cup of salvation, giving you thanks and praise. We call on the name of the LORD.*

¹⁴ I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. *Yes, we will fulfill your commands to us. We will love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We will love our neighbors. We will worship you LORD in the assembly of the church, wherever that is.*

¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. *Thank you Father, that all who belong to you that have died are precious to you. May that bring comfort to your saints now that are dealing with loss of loved ones during this time. May they know the comfort of your Holy Spirit. May they experience your loving presence and compassion. We also pray for a great awakening in this nation. May the lost come to know you. Prepare their hearts during this time to receive your Word and your love.*

¹⁶ O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains. *Lord Jesus, you are our King and we are your servants, born into your Kingdom. Thank you for freeing us from the bondage of sin and death. Yes the chains are broken.*

17 I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD. I will set aside time to pray and thank you for the gift of life, through your Son. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you for family and friends. Thank for our church family. May we never again take it for granted. If you will allow Father, we will again come to the sanctuary together to worship you and call upon your name. There is no other God but you, and we look forward to once again entering the courts in your Holy presence. Praise the LORD.

*18 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people,
19 in the courts of the house of the LORD-- in your midst, O Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD.*

Benediction: Titus 2:11-14 (NLT2)

11 For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people.

12 And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God,

13 while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.

14 He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds.

Amen.

Pastor Tim