

“A Deeply Deceptive Day” | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | March 28, 2021

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7

The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. 5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. 6 I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. 7 But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

Epistle Reading: Philippians 2:5-8

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Gospel: Mk 11:7-11, 14:32-37; 15:21-26

And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. 8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. 9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” 11 And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. 14:32 And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” 33 And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. 34 And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.” 35 And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” 37 And he came and found them sleeping.... 15:21 And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. 22 And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). 23 And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. 25 And it was the third hour when they crucified him. 26 And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.”

Introduction

Palm Sunday is an ambivalent day, evoking conflicting feelings. We vacillate between the triumph of the palms and the despair of the crucifixion.

Background

1. **The Problem**

- a. There is a problem in the palms. Triumph is going to turn into catastrophe less than a week later.
- b. Things in our lives often begin well but turn into disasters.
- c. We try to escape the destructive power of sin through distraction.

2. **The Refusal of the Disciples**

- a. Although Jesus warned his followers about his suffering and death, they refused to have anything to do with the cross.
- b. Jesus’s death wasn’t an accident. We are all responsible.

3. **Hope in the Cries**

- a. Jesus cried out in the garden and on the cross.
- b. In the storm-tossed boat, Jesus slept while his disciples were overwhelmed. But in the garden, Jesus is overwhelmed while his disciples sleep.
- c. Like Simon of Cyrene, we can be changed by coming close to Jesus.

Discuss

1. What signs do we ignore about the sin and pain in our lives?
2. Can we accept that we are responsible for Jesus’s suffering and death?
3. How do we try to escape sin’s power through distraction?
4. What specific actions could we take to move deeper into the heart of the events of Holy Week?

Conclusion/Application

We are tempted to skip from Palm Sunday to Easter. We should resist that temptation and instead dwell for a while in the complex emotions of Jesus’s passion. We must first move from the triumph of Palm Sunday through the abandonment of Maundy Thursday and the horror of Good Friday before reaching the glory of Easter Sunday.

Prayer

Father, you are the one who brings life from death. Forgive us for ignoring Jesus’s suffering and trying to escape from our own. Please help us focus our hearts on the events of Holy Week. Thank you for all you have done for our salvation. Amen.