

TO CARE & NOT TO CARE

Lent Sermon Series

Art: "Solens" by Dawn Waters Baker

SERMON NOTES



March 24, 2024

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"Diverse Excellencies"

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Isaiah 50:4-8

Revelation 5:1-6

Mark 11:1-18

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. The three things that Tim ended his sermon with were a call to Worship, Word, and Community. How/Where do you see opportunity for those in your life?
2. The fifth Sunday of Lent has two names – "The Sunday of the Passion" and "Palm Sunday" marking the somberness and the triumph. How do we feel these two themes at play still in our world today?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This Sunday we marked the beginning of Holy Week with a Palm Processional and a color change from purple to red. There's a lot going on this day and this week. So what is it that God especially wants from us on Palm Sunday? About what are we supposed to care?

The Triumphal

None of the Gospel accounts of Jesus riding into Jerusalem use the word "triumphal." That's a word that has been added later. Jesus's entry here is not itself unique. Kings entered cities with processions, with people waving and shouting and laying down cloaks to line their path. And by doing this, Jesus is identifying himself as a king. But his procession is unlike any other kingly procession. He rides in on a colt – a baby donkey. This is the smallest, youngest animal possible to ride. His entry is meant to say, "I'm a king but not the king you expected, not in the world's categories with the world's character." Our world as a whole and our lives in particular suffer because that which rules them is not like this. They do not possess the character of both lion and lamb as Tim said. But we need it, and, deep down, we want it.

The Temple

A few weeks ago, Tim preached on the story of Jesus driving out the money changers from the temple. For the Jews, the temple was the place at which the presence of God dwelt, where heaven and earth intersected. The Garden of Eden was presented as just such a place in Genesis. It was paradise because God was there. And we left the presence of God because we gave ultimate meaning to things other than him, putting human self-interest first. We all know what it's like to choose something that serves us at the expense of others – their life poured out for me. This was why God shut off the garden. And the temple was now the place where you passed under the sword in order to get to God. At Jesus' death, the curtain in the temple, the thing separating us from God, was torn in two from the top to the bottom. God paid the reentry price for everyone. Jesus was indeed triumphant, but his triumph was his life poured out for the life of the world. His kingly character is meekness – strength under the control of love for others.

The Tree

God wants from us today what Jesus wanted from the fig tree in our gospel passage. He wants fruit. A fig tree like this one that was not bearing fruit was sick inside. There was something wrong with it. And here it is a parable of the temple for Jesus – something that looks good from a distance but inside is empty, lifeless, and fruitless religiosity. A life that is simply busy with religious acts will not produce the fruit he seeks. Your life can be different if you give yourself to Jesus and let him recreate his character in you.