Palm Sunday: Mercy

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Simple Prayer: Teach me the power of mercy and the freedom of forgiveness.

Read for Context (What does it say?): Luke 23:33-34

Read for Insight (What does it mean?)

His Relentless Love: Jesus was innocent. Yet, a pagan Roman governor, a corrupt king, a coalition of jealous religious leaders and a raging mob all conspired to thwart justice. They stripped and beat the "King of the Jews," mocked him, drove him to bear his instrument of execution up a hill called "The Skull," hammered nails into his hands and feet and raised him up. They slayed him.

In the midst of this injustice, Jesus poured out mercy on them. In an amazing application of his teaching on prayer ("as we forgive those who trespass against us"), Jesus somehow rose above the injustice of his torture and asked his father to forgive his oppressors.

This is the way of relentless love. It pours out mercy where it is unmerited.

Our Response: Of course, if we look closely, we can find ourselves among the ranks of those who have received mercy. We have abdicated our responsibility to speak out for what is right; we have behaved in self-serving ways; we have sought control; we have followed the crowd. In our sin, we cry out, "forgive our trespasses." We receive forgiveness and find our relationship with God restored. We are free.

The challenge is to follow Jesus into this very practical act of mercy, even against those who have seriously wronged us. Like Jesus, we pray for those who have wronged us. And, because we are forgiven, we forgive. We forgive and are set free.

Read for Application (How should I respond?)

Notes:

Say/write a short prayer of commitment that flows from your final reading.