

Sunday, April 2, 2023  
PALM SUNDAY

### Matthew 21:1-16

Today, we begin our celebration of Holy Week. The week begins with what is traditionally called “Palm Sunday”. The events of the passage we just read take place in the first month on the Hebrew calendar. The month was referred to in the Torah as “Aviv” which refers to the ripening of the barley harvest. The month has been called “Nisan” since the Babylonian captivity of the Jews which means “first fruits”. The day is the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month. What is significant about this day? It is the day that the high priest of Israel goes into the fields commissioned to raise the Pesach or Passover lamb to be sacrificed for the sins of Israel. While the high priest is outside of the city, Jesus rides into the city with a crowd of followers and disciples. The crowds lay and wave palm branches and lay clothing on the road before Jesus as He enters. In the Jewish tradition, clothing was laid in the pathway before a king and branches were waved as a sign of victory. Shouts from the crowd accompanied these signs. The crowds shouted:

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest! “Hosanna” being a cry for salvation. The title Son of David reserved for the Messiah. The crowds were acknowledging the Messianic calling of Jesus and crying out for Him to save them. Without knowing exactly what was happening, they were rejoicing in God’s choice of Jesus as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. Let’s focus on what happened after Jesus entered Jerusalem because I believe it is a significant message for Capstone Church. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem was a divine visitation. You cannot have a divine visitation without the attending glory!

What did the divine visitation of Jesus do when He entered the temple in Jerusalem? Does His visitation to the temple tell us anything about what to expect in the days of visitation planned for us? Notice the transformation that took place in the temple at Jerusalem because it mirrors the work that God is doing this hour in Capstone. First, Jesus turned the temple into:

#### 1. A House of Purity

The first thing Jesus did was to clear out those who were using God’s house to make a profit. He drove out the money changers and those who

were selling sacrifices to the people. This work began at the head and has been flowing down on the people ever since it began. Jesus is cleaning house of the doctrines of greed, convenience, and selfishness. His whip of “conviction and discipline” has been flying all over the place and has been overturning lifestyles that are contrary to His Word and His lordship. This is an ongoing work: once it begins, it never stops. You see, this is a work of authority. The scribes and Pharisees wanted to know who gave Jesus the authority to do these things. Jesus’ authority must be established in His house or all you have is a religious work that scrubs the outside of man and leaves the inside full of dead men’s bones. Before any glory can be known, Jesus must reclaim authority of His house. Who is in authority in your house?

## 2. A House of Prayer

The next statement of Jesus gives direction to the people within the house: *My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’* Jesus rebuked the people in His house because they had made His house into something it was not meant to be. Oh, all the religious works went on in the house but the very power chamber of the house – the thing that made it what it was meant to be had been neglected. Jesus said, “My house is a house of prayer”. That is to be the focus of temple worship. If this house is not a house of prayer, then all else it becomes is futile! And that’s another thing: Jesus said His house was to be a house of prayer. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit – the place where God dwells. Jesus said that if His house was not a house of prayer, then it was a den of thieves! Whatever it is without prayer, don’t blame Him!

Is your house a den of thieves? The pastor must pray but for the house of God to experience the glory of God, the people must pray! The pastor praying is not enough to see the glory. God responds to the corporate cry of His people.

## 3. A House of Power.

After the house was purified and after the house became a house of prayer, THEN the blind and the lame came and were healed in the temple. Do you want to see manifestations of the glory? Purify your house and turn it into a house of prayer! Moses’ response to the call of God was not enough to bless the nation of Israel. The people also had to respond!

## 4. A House of Perfected Praise.

After the church becomes a house of purity, after it becomes a house of prayer, then it becomes a house of power and a house of perfected praise! Praise began to go up in the temple that by itself, released the power of discernment! All agendas contrary to that of God could no longer remain hidden! The attending revival that happened as a response to purity and prayer reached down and affected the next generation who cried out praises in the temple! Do you want to see your children become disciples of Christ? How badly do you want that? This is what happened in the temple in Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday. This is what is happening in Capstone today!

Today's Scriptures:

- Matthew 21:1-16