

**4.10.22 –Palm Sunday**  
**“Victory and Rejection”**

The United Baptist Church, Annandale, VA

**Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 (NLT) ~ Pam**

<sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!

His faithful love endures forever.

<sup>2</sup> Let all Israel repeat:

“His faithful love endures forever.”

<sup>19</sup> Open for me the gates where the righteous enter,  
and I will go in and thank the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> These gates lead to the presence of the Lord,  
and the godly enter there.

<sup>21</sup> I thank you for answering my prayer  
and giving me victory!

<sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders rejected  
has now become the cornerstone.

<sup>23</sup> This is the Lord’s doing,  
and it is wonderful to see.

<sup>24</sup> This is the day the Lord has made.  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

<sup>25</sup> Please, Lord, please save us.  
Please, Lord, please give us success.

<sup>26</sup> Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
We bless you from the house of the Lord.

<sup>27</sup> The Lord is God, shining upon us.  
Take the sacrifice and bind it with cords on the altar.

<sup>28</sup> You are my God, and I will praise you!  
You are my God, and I will exalt you!

<sup>29</sup> Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!  
His faithful love endures forever.

**L: These are Words of Praise from God! C: Thanks be to God.**

**Luke 19:28-40 (NRSV) ~ Pam**

*Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem*

<sup>28</sup> After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

<sup>29</sup> When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” <sup>32</sup> So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them.

<sup>33</sup> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup> They said, “The Lord needs it.” <sup>35</sup> Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> As he rode along, people

kept spreading their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup> As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying,

“Blessed is the king  
 who comes in the name of the Lord!  
 Peace in heaven,  
 and glory in the highest heaven!”

<sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” <sup>40</sup> He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

**L: These are Premature Words of the People of God!** C: Thanks be to God.

**Please pray with me:**

Jesus, our Savior, be with us now as we begin the journey to the cross. Let us rejoice in your presence and your mission. Let us know that you are love incarnate, and through you, we rejoice. Let us also live with a humble spirit and heart of contrition. May we ponder your words and live out our faith as we prepare ourselves to receive the greatest gift of resurrection after the most horrid death of crucifixion. Lord, in this familiar story, speak new meaning through your messenger. **“Amen.”**

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Thank you for your flexibility last Sunday. As you saw this morning, the elevator is repaired, with only a couple of fuses out. I was impressed by your adaptability and quick support to help us worship together and to discover the kitchen fan source of the noise. I mention it in gratitude and as an observation about our spiritual resilience as congregants, almost post-pandemic. The way everyone pitched in is what we learned about “pioneering” last year. Lewis and Clark’s team expected rivers to get to the West yet encountered huge mountains they had to cross. They reassessed their resources and direction and carried on. That adaptive leadership and personal resilience you demonstrated is what churches must have today to grow. So, take a quick moment to affirm your spiritual development. Well done.

Happy Palm Sunday! This is a bittersweet day of each year, because it ushers in the beauty of greening up lawns and beautiful flowers peeking

through, happy memories of Easters past, the joy of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, yet also the beginning of Holy Week, remembering the Lord's Last Supper, the trial, Jesus' punishment by the whips, and his endurance of contempt and the crucifixion. We must stand firm in **our** patience to witness His Resurrection next Sunday. If you haven't already told me yes, please let me know if you can attend Good Friday's light lunch and service. We have between 8 and 12 so far, and room for more.

For this strange week and for our many blessings, we give thanks. This psalm was written in thanksgiving for victory in battle. Before the feast celebrations and festivals, it was customary to practice entrance and gratitude rituals for victories over the year. The Hebrew Scriptures also prophesied the coming of a Messiah king to save Israel. Every Davidic king, even Solomon, performed this litany with the priest and the people responding:

<sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!  
His faithful love endures forever.

<sup>2</sup> Let all Israel repeat:  
"His faithful love endures forever."

This psalm was read aloud annually at the Feast of Tabernacles, where bundles of palm, myrtle, and willow branches called *lulabs* were brought in procession into the interior of the temple (Lev. 23:40, Neh. 8:15). The branches were tied with cords and attached to what the King James Version calls the "horns" of the altar. Most Old Testament altars had what looked like horns of an animal at each of the four corners of the altar. The branches would be tied onto those four corners. For blood sacrifices, the animals also would be tied by cords to the horns, and according to Exodus 29:12, blood of the animal would be spread by the priest's fingers

on the tips of the horns. You may or may not draw similarities as to how Jesus was bound to the cross.

This passage is associated with Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem just before the Passover. The song praised God's love of Israel; the psalmist proclaimed that the Lord was his strength, and because of God's right hand, he would live and enter the gates of righteousness. We know that God's love sent Jesus, his only son, and only through him will we enter the gates of righteousness.

Jesus had just been in Jericho, and had met and showed mercy to Zacchaeus, the rich chief tax collector. He went on ahead toward Jerusalem near Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives. We recall that he had recently raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany, and word was getting around of his power. Jesus instructed two disciples to acquire a donkey colt for him to ride, even though it was untamed. If the owner questioned them, they were to say, "The Lord needs it." They found one, and the owner complied.

As Luke authors the story, the disciples put their cloaks on the donkey (there was no saddle), and other followers (i.e., the "multitude" in our translation or "crowd" in other translations) spread their cloaks on the ground before him, like a red carpet at an awards show. In Luke, unlike the other gospel accounts, there is no evidence of a huge crowd, just his disciples and recent followers. The disciples and followers cheered him on, like in a royal parade: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" This phrase is like Luke 2:13-14, as we read at His birth: "<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in

the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” The disciples were repeating Christ’s purpose here on earth. When the Pharisees rebuked them for calling him a king, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees! Even if all the world is silent about my being here, the inanimate stones themselves will cry out against you and tell others of my love and sacrifice (paraphrased).

We know that the title king would be used again to ridicule him at the cross. Up to now, Jesus had not claimed the title, Messiah; he had given clues to his followers, but now he was ready to confront the religious authorities with what was prophesied and who he was (Zec. 9:9-10). Some interpret his procession as a strategic maneuver to enter like a king in a nationalistic sense, but that was not in Jesus’ character. Rather, donkeys were common modes of transport. Yes, riding into the city in that manner created a dissonance of royalty vs. humility, which seems purposeful, but was not. He needed a ride. As Messiah, it would be like God himself (whose name, Yahweh, they could not even say aloud) were meeting them on a donkey! It was a bit too much to take, and the followers went wild. He was like a celebrity to his followers by now; they had become friends over the years of travel, had witnessed miracles of healing, life, and death, and so believed He was the Messiah.

What they did not realize on this day was that this victory over Rome would become rejection and defeat at trial. The Monday after the entry was when Jesus lost his temper and overturned the temple commerce tables. Then on Tuesday, the Jewish leaders questioned Jesus. On Wednesday, Judas betrayed him by accepting the bribe. On Thursday,

they dined together for the last time, went to Gethsemane where Jesus prayed and was arrested. On Friday, he was tried and crucified.

Friday is when we will meet again, starting with a meal together (like Maundy Thursday), and then journey to the cross through Scripture and hymns. Today's opening hymn sang Hosanna! But our parting hymn will not be jubilant; we will respond to the week we begin today, asking God for "Mercy Still" . . . Prepare yourselves to receive Christ with fresh understanding this year. //

**Will you pray with me?** Father God, we don't like this part of your son's story for our redemption. Help us to study and ponder the events of the coming week, anyway, using the new prayer tools. Speak into our lives in a way that assures us yet challenges us to share your story with others. We thank you for the sacrifice of your Son, who teaches us and lives within us. Lord, let us be Godly examples for others who do not know you. Have mercy on us. **Amen.**