

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

April 14, 2019

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Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Luke 12:1-49

Palm Sunday in some traditions and Bible translations is also known as "Cloak Sunday." Crowds spread their cloaks on the ground in addition to palm fronds as Jesus drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage near the Mount of Olives. Matthew's and Mark's Gospels state garments were spread on the road as well as branches from trees. John's Gospel only mentions palm branches being used. Luke's Gospel states that the two disciples who went to secure the colt for Jesus to ride, threw their garments on the colt. There is no mention of palm branches being used or hosannas being sung. The use of palm branches was normally laid for military victors in ancient Rome. However, the word 'peace' was heard from the crowds rather than hosannas being sung.

I found it interesting to learn that the cloaks used in Jesus' time were the most expensive article of clothing one possessed. Most people owned only one cloak that was constantly mended and never discarded. For the poor, a cloak was more than an article of clothing. It was their shelter and home. The holy

poor of Luke's narrative place all that they have at the disposal of the Messiah as he approaches Jerusalem.

To be a disciple of the Redeemer Jesus we are to "lay down" whatever we have and are as we serve one another - to "empty ourselves" as the Apostle Paul writes to the Philippians. We are to "lay down" our comforts and fears and pride in order to become vessels of God's life and love in our own Holy Week Journeys and in our small Jerusalem corners of the World.

Let's think about putting ourselves on the path that Jesus followed on Palm/Cloak Sunday. What would we be willing to lay on the colt or road?

What is the most precious thing we own?

What is that one thing that defines who we are, the one thing that we would be totally lost without?

Our Job? Our profession? Is it our work that gives life meaning? Do we find our identity in what we do as a cashier, a sales person, a lawyer, a manager, a police officer, a health care worker, carpenter, a computer tech? Does our work express what we want to make of our life and our world?

So are we willing to lay it all down on the road?

Or is it our skill as a writer, a cook, a carpenter, a painter? Do we find our life's satisfaction in what we create? Do we find

our joy in expressing what others are unable to express and see their awe and delight at what we are able to communicate in the medium we work in? Or is our greatest joy the pleasure we bring with our beef stew or chili or chocolate chip cookies?

Or do we consider ourselves blessed to be able to fix what is broken or restore what's been lost?

Will we lay it all down on the road?

Or maybe it's being a loving parent or grandparent; a patient, generous teacher; a successful coach that can make a team out of a bunch of players.

Are we willing to lay it all down on the road?

Whatever it is that makes us the person we are, whatever gifts we possess that give our life purpose and meaning-will we lay it all down on the road?

Would we lay our work, our talents, our love before the "One who comes in the name of the Lord?"

Pause

As Jesus rode along, the people were spreading their cloaks on the road...the whole multitude of his disciples began to praise God with joy for all the mighty deeds that had seen.

What are you and I willing to lay down on the road?

Resources for this Sermon:

- The Bible – The New Revised Standard
- Connection for April 14, 2019
- Lectionary Levity by Ian S. Markham and Samantha R.E. Gottlich – Palm Sunday information