

Sunday of the Passion, Palm Sunday

Welcome to worship!! Today we celebrate a Sunday with two names – Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday. To remember with joy our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week, and to reflect on his awful suffering and death, all in the same service, is almost more than we can manage. A strong tension is created in us, which is exactly what is supposed to happen. It shouldn't have happened this way, not to the Son of God. Yet because of God's love for us, it did happen this way – for us! A special welcome to our guests this morning. We are glad that you are worshipping with us today. You are welcome anytime!

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Prelude
Greeting and Church Announcements

THE INVITATION TO WORSHIP

Philippians 2:5-11, responsively

P: The attitude you should have is the one Christ had:
C: though he always had the very nature of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be flaunted but he emptied himself, and taking the form of a servant, he became like man and appeared in human form.
P: He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.
C: Therefore, God has highly exalted him, and has given him the name which is greater than any other name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Opening Prayer
P: Let us pray.

C: Mercifully assist us, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts whereby you have given us life everlasting; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE HOLY GOSPEL THE STORY OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

Narrator: Near the towns of Bethany and Bethpage, as they approached Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples came to the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of his disciples on ahead with these instructions:
Jesus: Go to the village there ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a colt tied up that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here.
Narrator: So they went and found a colt out on the street, tied to the door of a house. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders asked them.
People: What are you doing, untying that colt?
Disciple: The Master needs it and will send it back at once.
Narrator: The people let them go and they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their coats over the animal and Jesus got on. Many people spread their coats on the road while others cut palm branches in the field and spread them on the road as well. The people who were in front and those behind began to sing and shout:
People: Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!

THE PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION

Children's Message
Hymn "All Glory, Laud and Honor"

Narrator: The people who were in front and those behind began to sing and shout:
People: Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!
Narrator: Some of the Pharisees in the crowd grumbled.
Voice: You see, we are not succeeding at all. Look, the whole world follows him!

Narrator: And they turned toward Jesus.

People: *Teacher, command your disciples to be quiet!*

Jesus: I tell you, if they keep quiet, the very stones and rocks themselves will start shouting praise to me.

Narrator: Then the chief priests and leaders met together and made plans to arrest Jesus secretly and put him to death.

Voice: But we must not do it during the Passover, or the people will riot.

Narrator: They said this because they were afraid of the people. Then Judas went off and spoke with the chief priests and the officers of the Temple guard about how he could hand Jesus over to them. They were pleased and offered to pay him money for it.

Judas: What will you give me if I hand Jesus over to you?

Voice: Thirty pieces of silver.

Narrator: Judas agreed to it and started looking for a good chance to betray Jesus to them without the people knowing it.

(Four days later, in the evening.....)

Narrator: When the hour came, Jesus and the twelve disciples sat down to eat. An argument came up among the disciples as to which one of them should be considered the greatest.

Jesus: The kings of this world have power over their people and the rulers lord it over them. But this is not the way it shall be among you. Rather, the greatest one of you must be like the least, and the leader must be like the servant. Who is greater, the one who sits down to eat or the one who serves him? The one who sits down, of course. But I am among you as one who serves.

Narrator: Jesus rose from the table, took off his outer garment, and tied a towel around his waist. Then he poured some water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel. He came to Simon Peter.

People: *Are you going to wash my feet, Lord!*

Jesus: You do not know, now, what I am doing, but you will know later.

People: *You will never, at any time, wash my feet!*

Jesus: If I do not wash your feet you will no longer be my disciple.

People: *Lord, do not wash only my feet, then! Wash my head and my hands, too.*

Jesus: Do you understand what I have just done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and it is right that you do so, because I am. I

am your Lord and Teacher, and I have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash each other's feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you. Now you know this truth; how happy you will be if you put it into action!

Hymn "Jesu, Jesu"

Narrator: Jesus was deeply troubled.

Jesus: One of you is going to betray me – the one who is eating with me.

Narrator: The disciples were very upset and looked at one another. Then they began to ask among themselves which one of them it could be who was going to do this, and they began to ask him, one after another.

People: *Surely you don't mean me, Lord?*

Judas: Surely you don't mean me, Teacher?

Jesus: So you say, Judas, hurry and do what you must.

(Preparing for the meal)

Pastor: Words of Institution & The Lord's Prayer

Distribution

Hymn during distribution

"What Feast of Love"

Narrator: And when they had sung a hymn, Jesus left and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him.

Jesus: You will all fall away because of me this night. But after I am raised up, I will go to Galilee.

People: *Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.*

Jesus: Truly I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.

People: *If I must die with you, I will not deny you.*

Narrator: Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane. Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples.

Jesus: Sit here, while I go over there and pray. Pray that you may not enter into temptation.

Narrator: And he took Peter and James and John with him and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

Jesus: My soul is very sorrowful, even unto death. Remain here and watch with me.

Narrator: And Jesus withdrew from them and going a little farther, he knelt down and fell on his face on the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from him.

Jesus: Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not my will, but your will be done.

Narrator: And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them asleep.

Jesus: Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch with me one hour?

Narrator: For a second and third time he went away and prayed. He prayed so hard that his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

Hymn "Go to Dark Gethsemane" (vs. 1-2)

Narrator: Then Judas came, leading a great crowd of people with swords and torches and weapons. Knowing what was going to happen, Jesus came forward.

Jesus: Who is it you are looking for?

People: *Jesus of Nazareth.*

Jesus: I am he.

Narrator: When Jesus said that, they fell down on the ground. Again.....

Jesus: Who is it you are looking for?

People: *Jesus of Nazareth.*

Jesus: I told you that I am he.

Narrator: Now Judas had given them a sign.

Judas: The man I kiss is the one; seize him and take him away.

Narrator: Judas came up to Jesus and kissed him.

Judas: Hail, Master.

Jesus: Friend, why are you here? Would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss, Judas?

Narrator: Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Then those who were with Jesus saw what was happening.

Disciple: Lord, shall we fight with our swords?

Jesus: No, put your sword back in its place, for all who take the sword shall perish by the sword. Do you think I cannot appeal to my Father and he will at once send me more than twelve armies of angels?

Narrator: The disciples fled. The soldiers seized Jesus and tied him up and led him away. Simon Peter followed Jesus at a distance.

Hymn "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"

Narrator: Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter went in and stood with them. A young woman, seeing him in the light of the fire looked closely at Peter.

Woman 1: This man was also with him. You were with the man Jesus.

People: *I don't know what you mean.*

Woman 1: You are also one of them!

Narrator: And Peter went out to the porch and the cock crowed. And when Peter went out, another woman saw him and she talked to the bystanders.

Woman 2: This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth. Aren't you one of this man's disciples?

People: *I do not know the man.*

Narrator: And after an interval of about an hour, still another, a man, insisted.

Man: Certainly this man was also with Jesus, for he is a Galilean.

People: *Man, I do not know what you are saying.*

Man: Certainly you are also one of them, because your accent gives you away.

People: *I am not.*

Narrator: Peter began to curse and swear:

People: *I swear I do not know this man you talk about.*

Narrator: And immediately, while Peter was speaking, the cock crowed the second time. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord.

Jesus: Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.

Narrator: And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Children's Message

Narrator: The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered,

Jesus: I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught openly and in the temple. I have said nothing secretly. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me. They know what I have said.

People: *Is that how you answer the high priest?*

Narrator: Then one of the attendants standing there slapped Jesus. The ruling priest and the whole court tried to get false testimony against Jesus in order to kill him, but they could not find any. At last two men came forward and gave false testimony against him:

People: *We heard him say, "I can tear down the temple of God and build it in three days. I will tear down this temple made by human hands, and in three days build another that is not made by human hands."*

Voice: Don't you have anything to say to this?

Narrator: But Jesus kept silent and did not answer.

Voice: Swear by the living God, and tell us: Are you the promised Savior, the Son of God, the Blessed One?

Jesus: I am, but I tell you from now on you will all see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Voice: He has blasphemed. Why do we need any more witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What is your verdict?

People: *He is guilty of death!*

Narrator: Then some of them began to spit in Jesus' face. The men who were holding him made fun of him. They covered his face, hit him with their fists, and slapped him. Then they took Jesus to Pilate. Pilate talked with Jesus and then faced the crowd.

Pilate: You have brought me this man as one who was subverting the people; and after examining him, I do not find this man guilty of any of your charges I will therefore whip him and release him.

Narrator: At that time of year, the governor was accustomed to releasing any one prisoner whom the crowd wanted.

Among the rebels in prison was the notorious Barabbas who had murdered during a riot. Pilate made an offer.

Pilate: You have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. Whom do you want me to release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus Christ?

People: *Away with this man and release Barabbas! We want Barabbas! Give us Barabbas!*

Pilate: Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ, whom you call the King of the Jews?

People: *Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*

Narrator: And their voices prevailed. When Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands, before the crowd.

Pilate: I am innocent of this righteous man's blood; see to it yourselves.

People: *His blood be on us and on our children!*

Narrator: So Pilate, willing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas and had Jesus scourged. The soldiers took Jesus, stripped him, and clothed him in a purple robe. They made a crown of thorns and forced it upon his head, and they put a stick into his right hand. Then they saluted him.

People: *Hail, King of the Jews!*

Narrator: Pilate went out again to the crowd.

Pilate: Look I am bringing him out to you so that you may know that I find him guilty of no crime. I find no fault in him at all.

Narrator: So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.

Pilate: Behold, the man.

People: *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*

Narrator: Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

*Hymn "Were You There" (vs. 1-3)

Narrator: And when they had come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Jesus, and the two thieves, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

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

Narrator: And one of the two thieves teased him.

People: *If you are the Christ, save yourself and save us, too.*

Narrator: But the other rebuked him.

People: *Don't you fear God, seeing that you are under the same sentence of death? We are getting what we deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.*

Narrator: And he turned to Jesus.

People: *Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*

Jesus: Truly, I promise you today you shall be with me in paradise.

Narrator: By the cross of Jesus stood his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and John, the disciple whom he loved, Jesus said to his mother,

Jesus: Woman, this is your son.

Narrator: Then he said to the disciple.

Jesus: This is your mother.

Narrator: And, from that moment that disciple took Mary into his own home.

RISE AND STAND IN SILENCE AS WE HEAR OF JESUS' DEATH

Narrator: And at three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice.

Jesus: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Narrator: After this, Jesus knew that all things were now accomplished so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

Jesus: I thirst.

Narrator: They filled a sponge with vinegar and put it up on a stick, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said,

Jesus: It is finished.

Narrator: And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said,

Jesus: Father, into your hands I place my spirit.

Narrator: And having said this, he bowed his head and died.

WE PAUSE FOR A MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PRAYERFUL MEDITATION

Confession

Pastor: Almighty God, hear us.....

All: *Merciful Father, I, a troubled and penitent sinner, confess to you all my sins and iniquities, with which I have offended you, and for which I justly deserve your punishment. But I am sorry for them and repent of them, and I pray for your boundless mercy. For the sake of the suffering and death of your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a poor sinful being. Forgive my sins, give me your Holy Spirit for the improvement of my sinful life, and bring me to life everlasting. Amen.*

Pastor: Father of mercies and God of all consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may hear and heed your Word, confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer.

All: Amen.

The Offering

*The Offertory "Doxology"

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*The Prayers of the Church

P: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs. O God, your Son entered Jerusalem proclaiming your truth:

C: Give us the courage to live the gospel without reservation.

P: Your Son offered mercy and wisdom to the world. Be with our service men and women and their families (esp....) guard them, guide them, grant them safety.

