

Palm Sunday

April 13, 2025

It's hard to imagine how things could have gone from such joy to such sorrow, from such hope to such despair, from such excitement to such fear. One minute Jesus is walking into Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd, and a short while later, well, we all know the story.

I don't know about you, but I can't hear the story we just heard without getting a very heavy heart. It pains me to think of what people did to our Lord, our Savior and our God. It looked like things were going to turn out much different, that this man was going to change the hearts of people, change their lives and change the world.

How could things have turned so quickly? How can that happen?

Well, maybe we don't have to wonder. Maybe that has happened to you. I know it's happened to me. Maybe you remember a time when everything was going well, when everything was filled with promise, when you couldn't wait to see how your life would unfold, or the lives of your kids. And then, well, life happened. And some of those joys didn't last. Some of those hopes weren't fulfilled. Some of that excitement dissolved into boredom, or worry, or unending pain.

I guess, in the end, our lives aren't that much different from Jesus' life after all. Certainly, they differ greatly in degree and that much is true. And we, of course, are certainly not God and therefore can not really understand what he went through, or what he ultimately did for our sake.

But the pattern is the same. The messiness of life is the same. The ups and downs, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and disappointments, they were part of Jesus' life, part of Jesus' world . . . and they are part of ours as well.

And so we gather as a community of faith this day to remember. And we gather to grieve. And to wonder. And to give thanks.

But there is another type of “gathering” that we are all invited to embrace this day. And that is the “gathering up” of our own personal disappointments, the gathering up of our failings, the gathering up of our sorrows and faults and pain and yes, even our sin.

And we walk, not alone, but with Jesus. We bring these things with us as we journey this week to a place not one of us really wants to go. And we hold all this “junk” (for lack of a better word), these palm branches, in one hand while we take Jesus’ hand in the other or rather he takes ours.

And we walk.

My dear friends, it takes faith to climb that lonely hill with our Lord. It takes faith to believe that only he can do anything about our problems and worries and sorrows and sin. It takes faith to believe that the story we just heard . . . is not the end of the story.

And it takes deep faith to believe that our individual stories aren’t complete either. There is still much more to be written, more to unfold.

The day we become more than we are today.

The day when our problems don’t get the best of us.

The day when our cynicism turns into hope, our fears into trust.

The day when joy and peace and meaning fill our hearts, no matter what might be happening all around us.

The day when our crosses have no power over us.

That’s what’s on the horizon. That’s what awaits us. That’s the promise.

And so we walk. We choose to walk.

We must walk, hand in hand with our loving Lord Jesus, not the path we have chosen, but the path God wants for each of us, a path that leads to being more than we can ever think of or imagine.

Have a blessed Holy Week.