

Sermon for 2019 Yr C Palm Sunday
Preached Sunday 4/14/2019 at St. James', Mount Vernon
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Jesus' entry into Jerusalem marks the beginning of the final chapter of Jesus' life. Each step on this journey is charged with significance, for Jesus and for us.

We walk this Holy Week journey with Jesus, to enter more deeply into his gift of himself for us, to experience more fully the way of love that gives itself for the sake of others.

During the sermons of Holy Week, I plan to ask the question, where is Jesus? Where is he in his journey? Where is he physically, emotionally, spiritually? And where are we, with him?

So, where is Jesus today?

At this Palm Sunday moment, Jesus is at the focus of the projections of his disciples and followers.

They think he is entering triumphantly into Jerusalem, bringing the rebellion to the capital, ready to lead the revolt that will liberate Israel from its Roman occupiers. It's the culmination of their long journey together, as they've watched the crowds rally around Jesus, as they've watched him chastise the Pharisees and the Scribes, knocking down a peg those who would prevent Jesus from shaking up the status quo.

But Jesus knows that the evil oppressing Jerusalem is much more serious than the Roman military. It is the corruption of Israel's spiritual heart, the teachers and leaders who put their safety and status ahead of the concerns of God, ahead of the needs of a people who need their guidance to live as God desires.

Jesus knows that he has not come to Jerusalem to battle the Romans. He knows that he is entering Jerusalem to give his life, a sacrifice that will save his people, give them hope, and restore them to life filled with the knowledge of God.

Perhaps this entry into Jerusalem, filled with palms and triumphant Hosannas, seems ironic. But there is no irony in Jesus... just truth reflected in the poignancy of his entering the shining city of God, knowing that he is about to take it by storm, in a way that nobody can yet see or understand.

Jesus rides humbly on the donkey, as disciples and people praise and cheer him, and he looks on them all with love and compassion. They know not what they are saying or doing. But all will be well. It is all in God's hands. And what lies ahead is for the blessing of those whom Jesus loves, and for the whole world.

Amen.