Medit Palm/Passion Sunday 2026
Psalm 31:9-16; Phil. 2:5-11; Matthew 27:11-54.

Revisiting Solemn Moments

"But I trust in you, O Lord. . .my times are in your hands. . ." (Ps. 31:14, NRSV); ". . .and the governor asked him, Are you the king of the Jews? Jesus said, You say so."(Matt. 27:11, NRSV).

This week, we come to a moment unlike any other in our journey of faith. It begins with what has come to be known Palm/Passion Sunday. It has a touch of innovative fanfare as the Lord Jesus connects with Israel's prophetic history and of God's relationship with the chosen people and with the whole world. The triumphal entry by Jesus into Jerusalem leads us to the events of the rest of the week that follows. It is thus called Palm/Passion Sunday because the simple acts of adulation made by adoring crowds as Jesus entered Jerusalem, while undoubtedly heartfelt, soon died down and forgotten. And the once sunshiny happy face of a city turned snarling, hostile crowd whipped up by misguided, tradition entrenched leadership. We here revisit these solemn moments not for purposes of judgment over that feckless crowd so long ago. For faith requires us to see ourselves and all of humanity mirrored in that miserable story, yet it is precisely how God works in everything that takes place in the world. In our world even now. It is a solemn moment. It is a moment of opportunity to ask ourselves, perhaps individually. How often I wonder, that I go for the comfortable and familiar, forgetting or failing to see the whole picture that includes the suffering that I instinctively reject?

"Do not go gentle into that good night", wrote Dylan Thomas, "rage, rage against the dying of the light…"Thomas wrote that famous villanelle to his dying father. He urged his father to fiercely reject death at all costs to the end, and not to accept it too readily. It is a stance characterized by raw resolve to persevere and overcome. It is a very touching gesture of a son to his father, which mirrors their enduring fealty for each other. In contrast, it is terrifying to contemplate how the world, in its complexity, could be both so gracious, and then be also utterly mean and ugly with hatred at the same time. Our time, as Jesus' time was, looks like exhibit one for that in what is happening right around us. Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, in a recent address to the country at the floor of the U.S. Senate bemoaned that we used to be the country that every other nation on earth admired and loved so much because of our passion for justice and the forgotten of the world; now he said the whole world is asking, "Whatever happened to that once beloved country, America?" And he intoned as he concluded, "Let us not let this be the last word about America." I say, let it not be the last word for any country in this whole world that God loved so much, to which God sent his son in whom all can find life.

Palm/ Passion Sunday and the week that follows, taken together is a solemn moment of faith and strength for the journey. It is a moment to confront the complexities of life in all its joys and sorrows and be guided by the Spirit through it all. One thing is clear is that our journey of faith thrives through those complexities, and not reject it. I pray that we all find our observance of Palm/Passion Sunday and the Holy Week, and Easter truly meaningful and empowering for the living of our days, for such a time as this. AMEN.

Joy and peace,
Pastor Ben
Rev. Dr. Ben Vinluan