



Worship Resources for Sunday April 5th

Palm Sunday, Year A

We encourage you to read and reflect on these scriptures, songs, notes, and prayers as we look forward to our time of worship together this coming Sunday. You may access a PDF copy of this guide from our website, <https://emmausroadfc.org/worship-resource-20200405/>.

Please print this guide or have it handy in digital format for use during the service.

And don't forget to join us Sunday immediately following the service in our virtual foyer for a group video chat! <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/202653556>

ITEMS TO PREPARE

We will continue our Emmaus Road tradition of using Palm Branches during our service on Sunday, but we will have to get creative. Below are three options for you.

1. Print and cut out your palm branch. [Follow this link.](#)
2. Find a branch from the garden or yard and cut your own. Lavender is already blooming!
3. Save a palm branch photo to your phone and have it ready to display on your screen.

ALSO, don't forget to [print this guide](#) or have it readily available on your device for use during the service!

SERMON SCRIPTURE

In the days leading up to our Sunday gathering, please read through the sermon scripture as the Holy Spirit prepares your heart for the sermon inspired by this passage.

Luke 19:28-44 (NRSV)

WORSHIP

May we allow the words and melodies to give expression to our worship this week.

It Is Well With My Soul (arr. David Wise)

Horatio Gates Spafford | Philip Paul Bliss

The Nashville Studio Singer Community

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/nDIJz6zzHNU>



When peace like a river attendeth my way
 When sorrows like sea billows roll
 Whatever my lot Thou hast taught me to say
 It is well, It is well with my soul

Tho' Satan should buffet, Tho' trials should come
 Let this blest assurance control
 That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate
 And hath shed His own blood, for my soul

My sin O the bliss of this glorious tho't
 My sin not in part but the whole
 Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more
 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord O my soul

And Lord haste the day when the faith shall be sight
 The clouds be rolled back as a scroll
 The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend
 Even so it is well with my soul

CALL TO WORSHIP

Bold lines to be read aloud corporately.

We raise our voices and wave with joyful hope
 the palms of deliverance of God's people.
Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!

Our hearts are filled with expectation
as we welcome the coming king.

Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

We receive into the crowded streets of our lives
the one who is Savior, not only of us, but of all the earth.

Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

(Life in Liturgy, from the Christian Church Disciples of Christ)

PALM SUNDAY INTERACTIVE READING

Pastor Andy will read the Palm Sunday story below. Any time he reads the following words, you and your household are invited to say the following.

Town: Say - "Bustle-bustle-shove-and-bustle!"

Donkey: Say - "Ee Aaw!"

Coats: Say - "Zzzzip!" and mime unzipping coat

Shouted: Shout - "HOSANNA!" and wave palm

Matthew 21:1-11 (*adapted for interactive reading*)

21:1 When they had come near the town, Jesus sent two disciples,

21:2 saying to them, "Go into the town ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a smaller donkey with her; untie them and bring them to me.

21:3 If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately."

21:4 This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

21:5 "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

21:6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them;

21:7 they brought the donkey and the smaller donkey, and put their coats on them, and he sat on them.

21:8 A very large crowd spread their coats on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

21:9 People of the town crowded ahead of him and shouted, "**Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!**" (wave palm during the whole quote of the crowd shouting)

21:10 When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?"

21:11 The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

CONFESSIONAL PRAYER

O Lord, who on this day
entered the rebellious city that later rejected you:
we confess that our wills are as rebellious as Jerusalem's,
our faith is often more show than substance,
our hearts are in need of cleansing.

Have mercy on us, Son of David, Savior of our lives.
Help us to lay at your feet all that we have and all that we are,
trusting you to forgive what is sinful,
to heal what is broken,
to welcome our praises
and to receive us as your own.

(John Paarlberg, pastor of First Church in Albany, New York)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters;
and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.
Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good and you will delight in the richest of fare.
Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.
I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.
(Isaiah 55:1-3 NIV)

All: Thanks be to God

SERMON NOTES

Sermon notes may be downloaded in PDF format from our website shorturl.at/fpST5

Alterna Civitas

Luke 19:28-44 (NRSV)

INTRO

Palm Sunday presents us with a unique opportunity. On one level we can look at the events of Palm Sunday and understand them at the surface level; a remembrance of Jesus' ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.

However, when we consider the events of Palm Sunday in context, it speaks to us deeply about the relationship between the Church and the State.

THE PARADE IN IT'S WORLD

When the praises ringing out in streets just outside of Jerusalem in honor of Jesus got too loud the Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke the crowd in order to quiet them down. They did this because they were worried that Caesar would be threatened by the praise offered to Jesus. Raising too much of a raucous could be seen as a revolutionary act against Rome.

As the parade crested the hill, Jesus began to weep and said, "If only you knew, on this day of all the days, the things that lead to peace. But you can't see. A time will come when your enemies will surround you, crush you, and level the city leaving no stone unturned."

Jesus knew that they wouldn't quite understand the significance of the day, that moment. His message of peace would not be received by a people consumed by ways of empire....and it broke his heart.

Remember, this is a mostly Jewish audience. They knew the prophets well. Image a few there that day that realized the full drama of the moment by remembering the words of the prophet Zechariah

*⁹ Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey..."*
*¹⁰ "I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
and the warhorses from Jerusalem,
and the battle bow will be broken.
He will proclaim peace to the nations.
His rule will extend from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth."
(Zechariah 9:9-10)*

The Palm Sunday parade is a parallel alternative to the parade of Pilate. In the same way, the Church is to be a parallel alternative city to Rome.

THE CHURCH AS AN ALTERNATIVE CITY

The general term for how any society organizes their lives together is "politics." Politics is nothing more than seeking to answer the core question, "How do we organize our shared life together?"

Empire is a kind of "politic." That is; ways of life, concepts of city and citizenship, and commonwealth. It has a mode of operation that demonstrates who is valuable and who is not; what matters most and what does not.

The Church is also a "politic." The Church must be ready to challenge the prevailing assumptions about the life of empire because of their allegiance to Jesus as King. The Church is to develop new ways of organizing our lives together based on the kingdom of God and the teaching of Jesus. **In this way, the life of the Church is ALWAYS political.**

This is part of the subtext of the Palm Sunday passage! Jesus did not ride into Jerusalem on a donkey because it was the most efficient mode of transportation, he thought it would be cute, or good marketing for his cause. He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to directly call into question the empire's politic and offer an alternative. It was the very thing his life had been about to that point and a fitting beginning to a week in Jerusalem that would end in his death at the hand of empire and culminate in resurrection. His life, death, and resurrection all demonstrate the alternative politic that the Church is to be about! The way of self-sacrificial love!

APPROACHING POLITICS

As people of faith, we are caught trying to navigate a politically divided world. And a number of approaches have been suggested:

One approach is to say that faith and politics should never intersect. To do this would be to do the very thing our ancient brothers and sisters in faith refused to do! They did not want to turn Jesus and his message into just another religion about a peaceful afterlife. Certainly the message of Christianity includes that, but it is so much more than that! Jesus had real ideas about how to organize our lives together. Which is to say, Jesus had “political” ideas.

Another approach is to assume that faith and partisan politics should be conflated into one. Unfortunately, much of American Church has done exactly this by attaching themselves to partisan politics and assumed that everything a particular political party does is most in line with the message of Christ. (This is true on both sides of political ideology). You can be certain that if you assume that either side of the American political spectrum fully captures the message of Christ and His Kingdom then you have a deeply compromised faith.

A third approach is Political Theology. Political theology takes the politics of empire and seeks to evaluate it theologically. You look at any given policy, practice, or law and evaluate it through the eyes of the kingdom of God. This is a decent solution. If large portions of the American Church would do this honestly we would be better for it!

There is a better alternative. A fourth option called Theological Politics. Instead of trying to look at politics through a theological lens, theological politics start with the conviction that “the Church is to be an alternative city shaped by the ways of Jesus and formed around the confession that Jesus is LORD.” From there, we work out our political lives and convictions.

The difference is this: We aren’t trying to take empire politics and evaluate (although that’s important), we are taking our theology and building a politic (way of organizing ourselves) out of that.

Jesus’ shorthand way of talking about this is “the kingdom of God.”

My encouragement to us is to make sure we take our cues on what is best for our world from Jesus, not Caesar!

CONCLUSION

Early Christians living in the Roman empire were so formed by the ways of the kingdom that people were drawn to their lives. Author Alan Kreider says in his book, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church*, **“their reflexes and ways of life suggested that there was another way to perceive reality - that made the Christians interesting, challenging, and worth investigating.”**

In a world full of fear, hate-speech, and division, let’s be interesting, challenging, and worth investigating!

COMMUNION

Prepare the elements of “bread” and “wine” for use as we gather around The Lord’s Table. These can be any items convenient around the home that symbolize these for you.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Leader: In unity with the Church throughout the ages, we confess our faith:

**All: Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation,
and deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

BENEDICTION

My brothers and sisters,
as we enter into this holy week,
let us keep our eyes on Jesus.
He will encourage us in our time of need.