

“The Praise, The Plot, The Protest”

Message by DD Adams
Providence Kemptown U.M. Church
PALM/PASSION SUNDAY
6th SUNDAY IN LENT
March 25, 2018

The first reading centers on the Triumphal Entry of Jesus as he comes into Jerusalem riding on the foal of a donkey. The first lesson comes from Matthew’s gospel, chapter 21, verses 7 through 11. The disciples brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

The crowds that went ahead of [Jesus] and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!” When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

In the midst of the bustle of Jerusalem at Passover comes a parade into the city. The parade wasn’t filled with grandeur and might, and Jesus rides through Jerusalem and presents himself as a king. The city was stirred and the people shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”

**1 Hosanna, loud hosanna
the little children sang;
through pillared court and temple
the lovely anthem rang.
To Jesus, who had blessed them,
close folded to his breast,
the children sang their praises,
the simplest and the best.**

**2 From Olivet they followed
mid an exultant crowd,
the victory palm branch waving,
and chanting clear and loud.
The Lord of earth and heaven
rode on in lowly state,
nor scorned that little children
should on his bidding wait.**

**3 "Hosanna in the highest!"
That ancient song we sing,
for Christ is our Redeemer,
the Lord of heaven, our King.
O may we ever praise him
with heart and life and voice,
and in his blissful presence
eternally rejoice.**

But there were mixed feelings in the crowd that day. There were those present who had seen Jesus raise Lazarus from death to life the day before. They were caught up in the excitement of believing that Jesus, the miracle worker, would become their new king and deliver them from Roman oppression. And then, there were the religious men. They wanted Jesus to rebuke his disciples from

shouting praises, but Jesus said, even the stones would cry out if they were silent (Luke 19: 40). So, they plotted to arrest him and put him to death.

The second lesson is Matthew 26, verses 2 through 5. Jesus tells his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified. Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him.” The Romans saw Jesus as a trouble maker and a security risk. Maybe Jesus would begin a revolution or attempt to turn over the Roman establishment. As the events of that evening moved along, Jesus ate the Last Supper with his friends, he was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, and then headed up the mountain to dark Gethsemane with his disciples.

“Go To Dark Gethsemane”

**1 Go to dark Gethsemane,
You who feel the tempter's pow'r;
Your Redeemer's conflict see;
Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away;
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.**

**2 Follow to the judgment hall;
View the Lord of life arraigned;
O the worm-wood and the gall!
O the pangs His soul sustained!
Shun not suff'ring, shame, or loss;
Learn of Him to bear the cross.**

In this passage Jesus is praying and feeling much agony and distress. It's a quiet protest in prayer and complaint by Jesus to his disciples and to his Father. This portion of scripture is from Matthew 26, verses 36 through 46. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated.

Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.

“What Wonderful Love Is This”

**1 What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
what wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.**

**2 What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
what wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, that caused the Lord of life
to lay aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
to lay aside his crown for my soul.**

Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

Here we catch a glimpse of Jesus’ humanity. We see how he prayed. Usually Jesus prayed “away” from the crowds and his disciples. But here, in his desperate hour of need, Jesus wanted to pray with his friends. And when they did not, he prayed with his Father, and his prayer was honest and gut-wrenching.

Yes, Jesus prayed in protest of what was happening to him. He’s distraught. He’s been silently abandoned by those he thought loved him. It was a final letting-go of expectations about life. Jesus turned and accepted what would happen, and it gave him courage to move ahead with what was before him.

As we pray with our Maker, we experience the blessings of turning away from the noise of the world in order to turn inward to hear that “still small voice” of God. In doing so, we find our own voice of wisdom. We find a release of our will be conflicted with God’s will.

Jesus accepted his Father’s will. He yielded. He prayed a prayer of consecration and dedication. What started as a protest in prayer was now the perfect prayer. Now, Jesus had the strength to move forward in God’s direction; this is the prayer that never fails.

Jesus came to his disciples and said, “Behold, the hour is at hand, and the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going, my betrayer is at hand.” And while he was still speaking, Judas came, along with a great crowd with swords and clubs. The chief priests, the elders of the people and Judas took him away. Jesus was taken to Caiaphas the High Priest, to Pilate the governor, and then scourged and crucified.