

AT HOME WORSHIP – April 5, 2020 – Palm Sunday

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP – Take a minute or two of quiet to prepare for worship

CALL TO WORSHIP - A reading from *Matthew 21:1-11*

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.'

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

'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.'

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

'Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

Today, we await Him who comes in the Name of the LORD.

Hosannah, Hosannah in the Highest.

He could have come riding gloriously on the wings of angels; but He chose to come to us on a donkey's back.

We greet our humble King with Palms and Praise. Come let us worship God our Creator, the Lord of Life!

A BRIEF CONFESSION

Lord hear our confession:

We have made choices harmful to others and to ourselves.

God of compassion, we rest upon your mercy.

We have, through inaction, failed to be faithful

God of compassion, we rest upon your mercy.

We have failed to live in ways that would heal our brokenness.

God of compassion, we rest upon your mercy and live by your forgiveness and love AMEN.

GREETING

The Lord be with you.

We gather to give thanks and praise to Jesus.

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

WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Isaiah 50:4-7a, 9a

*⁴ The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.*

Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

- ⁵ The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backwards.
⁶ I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.
⁷ The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced;
⁹ It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?*

Second Reading Psalm 31:9-10,12,14-16

- ⁹ Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress;
my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also.
¹⁰ For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.
¹² I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.
¹⁴ But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.'
¹⁵ My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.
¹⁶ Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.*

Gospel Mark 10:32-34

32 They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³saying, 'See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; ³⁴they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.'

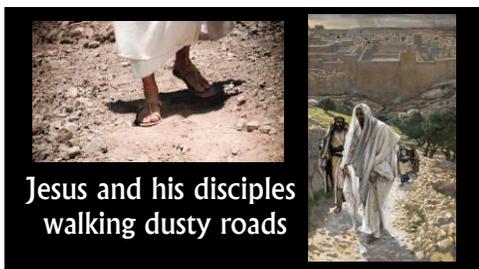
SERMON

Palm Sunday
April 5, 2020

He Kept on Walking

Topical

Note: The theme of this sermon built around the phrase '*He kept on walking*', comes from the book *Small Surrenders: A Lenten Journey* by Emilie Griffin



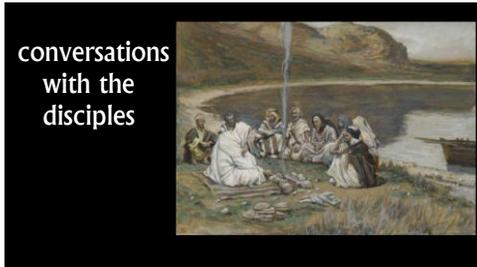
Jesus and his disciples
walking dusty roads

screen 1 I want you to imagine Jesus and his disciples walking dusty roads from one village to the next.



Jesus healing
&
teaching

screen 2 There were lame people and blind people that Jesus would heal, and then crowds would gather to hear him teach.



conversations
with the
disciples

screen 3 Then on the way to one village or the next, Jesus would have conversations with his disciples, trying to help them understand his mission, and his dream for the world.

And this whole time, they were heading for Jerusalem. Where Jesus knew he would come up against all the powers, where he would be abandoned, rejected, betrayed, humiliated, flogged, and nailed to a cross. *And yet he kept on walking*



And yet
he kept on
walking

screen 4

On Palm Sunday we celebrate what is often called Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem.



Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem

screen 5

I think we easily imagine that the focus of the whole city was on Jesus and that they knew what they were celebrating. The reality is that possibly thousands of pilgrims were flooding in for the Passover, and Jesus may not have been the center of attention at all. It was his small band of followers who, in excited anticipation, imagined they were part of a royal procession, and that Jesus would become king. Jesus let them treat him as royalty, even as he arrived on a donkey. But deep in his heart, he knew that this was also like a funeral procession, or a walk down death row.

Today we will focus on the words *'he kept on walking'* as a way to enter into the Palm Sunday story in a different way, perhaps, than we have become accustomed.

Let the words, '*he kept on walking*' be the refrain that teaches us something of who Jesus was and how he fit into God's plan of mercy and compassion for a broken world.

Jesus knew that every step he took was one step closer to his death. And yet ...
He kept on walking.

He knew that before he died he would have to confront the center of religious power, those who used God's name to manipulate, control and oppress. And yet ...
He kept on walking.

He knew that he would be betrayed to death by one of his friends and companions on the road. And yet ... ***He kept on walking.***

He knew that he would be falsely tried by a corrupt and unjust legal system. And yet ...
He kept on walking.

He knew the crowds were fickle and likely to turn on him as they had done to the prophets before him. And yet ... ***He kept on walking.***

He knew he would be mocked and humiliated. And yet ... ***He kept on walking.***

He knew his dearest and closest friends would fail him, abandon him, deny him, and struggle to believe in him. And yet ... ***He kept on walking.***

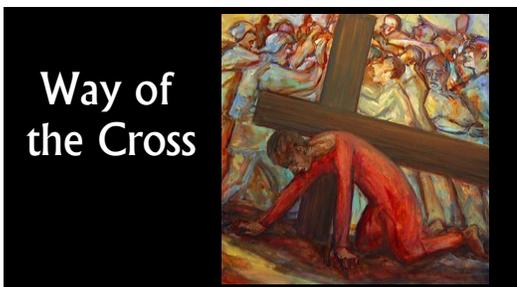
He knew he would be flogged and tortured almost beyond what he could physically bear. And yet ... ***He kept on walking.***

He knew his mother's heart and the hearts of the men and women who loved him would be broken. And yet ... ***He kept on walking.***

He knew he would suffer an agonizing death, and face the greatest confusion and darkness he had ever known. And yet ... ***He kept on walking.***

He knew that if he was faithful to the end, he would know the greatest joy, of bringing redemption to the world. And so ... ***He kept on walking.***

He knew that when all of it was through, he would return to the One from whom he came, the One who is Perfect Love. And so ... ***He kept on walking.***



screen 6

When we think of Jesus, and his Way of the Cross, we believe that with each step, he was identifying more deeply with us, with all of us, especially the most broken parts of

ourselves, and our communities, our world. He was identifying with all the pain and suffering and despair of a really messed up, broken, and lost humanity. He was identifying with all the oppressed and downtrodden ones of the world.

And so, Jesus invites us today to pick up our cross and take this path, the Way of the Cross. He invites us to walk in solidarity with others who are forced to walk a path of suffering, humiliation and death. He invites us to know our own weaknesses and brokenness and not be afraid to keep walking.

In the next part of the message today, we will reflect on the people we know and have grown to love ... friends, relatives, and neighbors. We will also reflect on people whose plight and circumstance in this world has found a place in our hearts and in our prayers. We will imagine that as Jesus walks, he gathers all of them up ... gathers them up with all of their brokenness, all of their suffering, all of their hurt ... Jesus walks with them. He knows of their hardship and sorrow because he walks the way of the cross ... a road and a journey filled with all the trials, deprivation, destitution, and poverty that seeks to strangle life in this world. We will imagine Jesus walking with them all and calling to others to join the march ... to walk the Way of the Cross. For in walking together, we help each other to gather strength and hope for the journey.

As his followers, as his disciples ... we have to be willing to take this walk. Yes, Jesus was the one crucified in the end. We, though, need to pray and do our best to accompany him on this journey. The disciples betrayed denied, and deserted him ... and we, too, may have our moments of doing the same. But, nonetheless, Psalm Sunday and the coming of Holy Week is the call to all the faithful to walk the walk with Jesus.



screen 7

Next we will identify groups of people who Jesus would gather up with him as he walked toward the cross. People whose suffering and trials were no stranger to him. Hear, in these groups of suffering people ... hear the call of Jesus to join the march and accompany our brothers and sisters in need of our help, God's help.



screen 8

We see the refugees of the world fleeing violence and hatred. Betrayed by their own people and leaders. Crushed, imprisoned, killed or scattered; they struggle to make a future in unfamiliar countries. Jesus gathers them up, to walk with him. Keep walking ...

In the Spirit of Christ we keep walking; and we join with you, Jesus, to work for healing and renewal.”



screen 9

We see those who are homeless, without food or shelter. We see those who in the midst of famine, struggle for water and food for their families. We see those caught in the grip of violence because governments and nations seek power at the expense of their people. Jesus gathers them up, to walk with him. Keep walking ...

In the Spirit of Christ we keep walking; and we join with you, Jesus, to work for healing and renewal.”



screen 10

We see neighbors battling isolation and depression. We see friends and family fighting sickness and disease. We see many caught in the grip of addiction, mental illness, broken relationships and lack of hope for change. Jesus gathers them up, to walk with him. Keep walking ...

All: In the Spirit of Christ we keep walking; and we join with you, Jesus, to work for healing and renewal.”



screen 11

We see those walking aimlessly unaware they thirst for God (as we all do). They busy themselves with distractions not knowing where their path is ultimately heading. Jesus gathers them up, to walk with him. Keep walking ...

In the Spirit of Christ we keep walking; and we join with you, Jesus, to work for healing and renewal."



screen 12

We see children and young people, so vulnerable sometimes, and yet amazingly resilient. We see them growing up in a world increasingly complicated and difficult to navigate. Jesus gathers them up, to walk with him. Keep walking ...

In the Spirit of Christ we keep walking; and we join with you, Jesus, to work for healing and renewal."



screen 13

We see our elderly struggling to remain independent. We see them in care facilities unable to be mobile as they once were, unable to care for themselves as they once did, unable to remember the beauty of their lives once lived. Jesus gathers them up, infirmities and all to walk with him. Keep walking ...

In the Spirit of Christ we keep walking; and we join with you, Jesus, to work for healing and renewal."



screen 14

We see all the people of the world struggling and suffering with the Corona Virus pandemic. We see people grieving who have lost loved ones. We see people fearful of becoming ill themselves, fearful for their future. We see healthcare workers tirelessly caring for the sick while placing themselves in harm's way. We see a world struggling to come together for finding ways to care for the sick, to find a cure. Jesus gathers us all up to walk with him. Keep walking ...

In the Spirit of Christ we keep walking; and we join with you, Jesus, to work for healing and renewal."



screen15

We see ourselves, the people of Bethany, in all our messy mix of gifts and deficits, our courage and fear, insight and illusions, love and hate; with all our different personalities and creativity and passion. Jesus gathers us up, to walk with him. Keep walking ...

In the Spirit of Christ we keep walking; and we (the People of Bethany) join with you, Jesus, in the march for healing and renewal." AMEN.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God the Creator,
by whom every person in heaven and earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.
We believe in one God:
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Amen

- Creed of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pray to God for the courage to walk with Jesus in these trying times. Pray for all the people with whom you walk. Pray that we can walk with the world in some way during this pandemic time. Pray for peace where there is conflict, for love where there is hate, pray for the hungry and the homeless

Pray for the people of Bethany, our Grand Canyon Synod, The ELCA, and all churches struggling to stay connected to their people during this difficult time.

Pray for all of us in this difficult time of the Corona Virus and those ill with the virus, for families and friends who have lost loved ones.

Pray for our leaders, both in our nation and throughout the world, to make decisions in this time that are wise and in the best interest of all.

Offer your own prayer concerns

OFFERING – **Please mail your weekly offering to the church** (thank you)

PRAYER OF BLESSING

God our Provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but also with blessings of time, talent, and treasure. Take and use these offerings in ways pleasing to you. Where there is need, bring provision. Where there is brokenness, bring healing. Where there is despair, bring hope. May this offering further your work among us and in the world. AMEN.

LORD'S PRAYER

SENDING

BENEDICTION

*The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. AMEN*

DISMISSAL

*We've been given new life in Jesus.
We carry the life and light of Jesus into the world. Thanks be to God!*