No Other Name; Palm Sunday

## (Matthew 21:9-10)

Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate with devoted believers, disciples and followers of Jesus around the world, celebrating the coming of Jesus into Jerusalem for the holy week. It’s during this time that we recognize the fulfillment of countless ancient prophecies, over 300 prophecies that Jesus Christ fulfilled in his birth, his sinless life, and his glorious resurrection. And so, it’s on this day, the Sunday before the Passover, that Jesus comes out of the wilderness and approaches Jerusalem.

Now, you may be surprised, but the early church, the apostles, Peter, James, and John, knew nothing about Palm Sunday. It wasn’t a thing, it wasn’t a holiday, it wasn’t something that was commemorated. In fact, it was four centuries later, before the church began to recognize Palm Sunday as a day to commemorate what the traditional Jews understood to be a messianic sign of the coming of the son of David.

In other words, they recognized that their king had come, but for many of them, they were confused about what that meant. And so, there was a lot of excitement that day, there were all these different perspectives, different points of view, but the one thing they knew for certain is what Scripture said. The prophet Zechariah had written,

“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9).

And so, here comes Jesus, riding into the city, reinforcing the expectation of the people that he is their king; the son of David, coming to free them from the oppressive rule of the Romans.

The people were filled with anticipation. This was the moment they’d been waiting for, and the crowd of people went ahead of him and began to spread their cloaks and palm branches on the road before him. Matthew tells us that they shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" (Matthew 21:9-10).

The answer to that question was more important than they realized because,

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

You see, what they missed, what most of us don’t understand today is that according to the Jewish calendar, on this particular day, what has become known to us as Palm Sunday, this was the day that the people were supposed to choose the Lamb that would be sacrificed for the Passover. This was a tradition instituted by God as he was preparing to liberate his people from slavery in Egypt. Moses told the people,

“On the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family” (Exodus 12:3).

And so, this was the day when each household would choose the lamb which would be sacrificed the afternoon before the Passover. And this was the day that Matthew tells us, “The whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" as Jesus entered Jerusalem (Matthew 21:10).

Today, this was the day when Jesus the Messiah came to the people riding on the colt of a donkey. He came as the sinless Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. But instead choosing him as the Lamb, instead of turning to Jesus, Lamb of God, they received him as their military deliverer, a political savior, and an earthly king.

And so, even though they correctly identified him as the Messiah, they misunderstood what he was there to do. Jesus had indeed come to save them, but not in the way they thought. And so, he wept as he approached Jerusalem, because for the most part the people weren’t interested in a Savior who would deliver them from the curse of sin. They were looking for a king who would liberate them from the oppression of Rome, but there is no other Savior,

“There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

And so, as Jesus approached Jerusalem, he said, “If you had only known on this day what would bring you peace” (Luke 19:42). Because he was offering them salvation, forgiveness of sins, and peace with God, but they were looking for a different kind of Savior. They were looking for a king that would liberate them from the oppression Rome. And so, when they saw Jesus coming on the colt, they saw him as a political savior and they shouted,

"Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matthew 21:9).

The people believed that their liberator had come, they thought this is where we take over, we’re going to drive these Roman devils out of Israel. And so, they shouted gleefully,

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9).

But as we look closer at this text, we recognize that the disciples were not feeling the exhilaration of the crowd. They weren’t experiencing what the crowd was experiencing in this moment. Because they began this pilgrimage to Jerusalem, following Jesus, agreeing with Thomas who said,

“Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16).

And so, they know, they believe that Jesus is going to Jerusalem to die.

It was 14 years ago when I flew out to Arizona, in April of 2009, to visit with my mother who was dying of cancer in the hospital. We talked and I prayed over her, asking the Lord to heal her, but then she said something that I’ll never forget. She said, “Not every story ends the way we want.” Now, I didn’t want to hear that, but I knew what she meant, she was just trying to prepare me.

Just like it was with Iva this morning when I got that call from the hospital.

That’s what Jesus had done with his disciples; he had prepared them for the fate that was waiting for him in Jerusalem. At first, he’d hinted about it but then he began to tell them plainly,

“That he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life” (Matthew 16:21).

And so, for three years Jesus had been preparing them for this week. In these last days he said to them,

“I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22:15).

And I love how God gives us glimpses, preparing us, helping us to assess our own lives. But for the most part he couldn’t seem to get through to them. Yes, there were glimpses of hope, a flicker of revelation, but their understanding would have highs and lows, mountains and valleys, rising and falling.

But then there was Peter, he was an interesting character, impulsive, spontaneous, even explosive; but there was something about Peter that Jesus saw. Something that he knew he could use, maybe it was his heart, maybe it was his passion, or maybe Jesus just saw his destiny. But Jesus saw something in Peter that made him say,

“Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).

And so, for the next three years of his life, Peter chartered Jesus back and forth from one side of the lake to the other in his boat. Because of his decision to follow Jesus he would never be the same again. Because of his connection with Jesus, he got to see and do things that he never would have experienced any other way.

He may have been rough around the edges, but he’s connected to Jesus, he’s one of the twelve. And so, he gets to see the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy cured, the deaf hearing, the dead raised, and good news preached to the poor (Matthew 11:5). There was something about Peter, something that God had placed inside of him, something that Jesus recognized in him that caused him to trust Peter with greater revelation.

You see, there are things you can’t trust to just anybody, but Jesus showed him the future, he allowed Peter to see him in his glory, taking him up on the mountain where he was transfigured before him. Peter saw Jesus face shining like the sun, his clothes as white as light, and suddenly there appeared Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus (Matthew 17:2-3). He allowed Peter to see such amazing things he didn’t even know how to respond, but he knew he had to do something because that’s just the kind of guy he was.

In fact, Peter was probably the first documented case of ADHD in biblical history, and so he’s always moving his hands, rocking back and forth from one foot to the other, just a really intense kind of guy. And he was the kind of guy that would stick with you, stand with you in a fight, and there was never any ambiguity about whose side he was on. In fact, when the chief priests and Pharisees came into the garden to seize Jesus, it was Peter who took out his sword and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear” (John 18:10). Peter was bold, he had lofty aspiration, he was always aiming high, that’s why he missed the servant’s neck and got his ear.

Peter would stand firm in a fight because he had this innate, instinctive, revelatory understanding of who Jesus was. In fact, one time, Jesus and the disciples were walking down the street when Jesus asked,

“Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (Matthew 16:13).

They were quick to reply with what some say, what the gossip was,

“Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (Matthew 16:14).

Because their hearts were filled with what man said about Jesus instead of what God said about Jesus. They knew what the newspaper said, but they didn’t have divine revelation, and so Jesus stopped and asked them,

"But what about you?" (Matthew 16:15).

And when he asked them, “Who do you say I am?” they got real quiet. Maybe they were intimidated, afraid they may answer incorrectly, but now I see what drew Jesus to Peter. Now, I see why Jesus called him, because there was no variation, no insecurity, no lack of confidence, about who he was following. Peter spoke up and said,

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

Now, to say that Jesus was the Son of God wasn’t new, but when he said, “You are the Christ.” When he said, you are the Messiah, you are the Anointed One, Jesus was shocked, because he hadn’t taught them that. He was still revealing himself, and so he said,

“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 16:17).

In other words, you are blessed because you have tapped into divine revelation. You know that there is no other name, you have tapped into divine revelation from heaven before the blood ever even hit the cross. This wasn’t revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock” (Matthew 16:18).

Not so much as on Peter, but upon this rock, this rock of revelation, this rock of faithful witnesses, this rock of people who hear from God. He said, “On this rock,” on those who have heard from the Father, on those who can see the unseen.

“On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18).

And so, he said, “It’s on this rock I will build my church.” He said, “Peter, you have heard from God, you have had divine revelation, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Now Jesus was going to take Peter even deeper, because he had all of these experiences. He’d seen all of the miracles, he’d seen him on the mount of transfiguration, he’d even walked on water, but now they came to that day; the day of unleavened bread, the day on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. And so, Jesus sent Peter and John saying,

“Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover" (Luke 22:8).

You see, when they came into Jerusalem, it wasn’t really about the donkey, the colt of the donkey, it was about the Lamb. It was about the Passover.

When the hour came, the disciples gathered around the table with Jesus, and they celebrated the Passover together. They are all sitting around the table like a Board of Directors, eating the meal when Jesus said,

“I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me” (Matthew 26:21).

Each of them was like, “He couldn’t be talking about me.” And yet secretly, each one of them knew something about themselves that made them question their motives and their integrity. And so, they were very sad and began to say to him one after the other,

"Surely not I, Lord?" (Matthew 26:22).

You see, they didn’t know what was in them, they didn’t know what they were capable of, but the Lord knows. In fact, he proved it, he turned back around and said,

“The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me” (Matthew 26:23).

Now, you could imagine the relief of the eleven, because Jesus wasn’t talking about them. And so, Peter was rejoicing in the fact that it wasn’t him, because he knew he wasn’t perfect. He knew there was conflict, turmoil in his life, and whatever it was in him that caused him to say, “Surely not I, Lord?” It wasn’t enough to cause that accusation to fall on him, and so he’s relieved, he thought he had gotten away. But then Jesus turns to him and says,

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat” (Luke 22:31).

Surely those words must have made him tremble inside because that’s not the kind of prophecy you want spoken over you. To sift you as wheat means that he’s going to tear you apart, break you into little pieces, and throw you into the wind. That’s how they sifted wheat in those days, but then Jesus says,

“But I have prayed for you, Simon"

Not that you won’t fail, Peter. I’m praying that your faith won’t fail, and when you have repented, when you come out of this,

“When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32).

Peter had thought he had escaped, he thought he was free after the whole betrayal thing, but now he was caught like a deer in the headlights. He’s frozen in his tracks, but then his mouth instinctively takes over, and he begins to argue with Jesus. “But Lord” he said,

“Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death” (Luke 22:33).

Once again Jesus prophesied, he answered him saying,

“I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me" (Luke 22:34).

For the first time Peter was silent, he had nothing to say. The same Peter who had been on the mountaintop, walking on the water, and seen Lazarus raised from the dead. Right after he got through saying that he would die for Jesus, he got nervous and shut up.

You see, it’s easy to talk about faith in church, but when your faith doesn’t transform your character. If your faith doesn’t affect how you interact with people at home. If your faith doesn’t make a difference there’s no sense coming to church and acting like you are anointed when you should really just sit down and say, "Surely not I, Lord?" (Matthew 26:22).

After they’d eaten the Passover meal, they sung a hymn, and went out to the garden, to a quiet place to pray. They were there in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus warned the disciples that his betrayer was coming.

“Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders” (Mark 14:43).

After a brief skirmish with Peter and the whole cutting off the ear thing, they took Jesus captive. The same Jesus who would slip through the crowds undetected, disappearing from their sight. The same Jesus who walked on water, who said, “I am he,” that same Jesus was caught.

“They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire” (Mark 14:53-54).

“They all condemned him as worthy of death. Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophesy!" And the guards took him and beat him. While Peter was below in the courtyard” (Mark 14:64-66).

When Peter saw them stripping Jesus, mocking him, and beating him like a slave, he was shook up and overcome with grief. One of the servant girls there saw Peter warming himself by the fire and said,

“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus” (Mark 14:66-67).

At that moment, Peter did one of the worst things a person could ever do, he denied knowing Jesus, he refused to acknowledge him.

So many Christians are quick to point fingers about moral failure, but how many times do we deny Jesus by our words and our actions? Peter denied knowing Jesus, that is the worst of the worst, because acknowledgment is everything. The Lord said,

"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33).

In other words, to acknowledge Jesus is everything, to recognize Jesus is everything, because when you fail to acknowledge him, it says that you are ashamed of him.

Peter who had faith enough to walk on water, who just cut off a man’s ear in a vain attempt to protect Jesus, now sees Jesus beaten and transformed from a lion into a bleeding lamb. Peter is shocked, devastated, and overwhelmed as he’s watching them spit in his face and strike him with their fists. And even others slapped him (Matthew 26:67). Seeing Jesus bleeding, his head rocking back and forth from their blows, it was just too much for him to bear, but they weren’t finished with Peter either.

“Those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" (Matthew 26:73-74).

I know it’s easy to point fingers at Peter, but we need to remember that he grew up in a culture of intimidation. The Romans intimidated the oppressed, they kept the Jews in line with the threat of crucifixion, and there was no question in his mind that they would kill him too.

“When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." Again, he denied it” (Mark 14:69-70).

And the same Peter who just hours before had argued with Jesus that he would never deny him. The same Peter who performed miracles, who cut off ears, who had divine revelation of Jesus being the Christ. Now,

“He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about" (Mark 14:71).

Peter who had been a nobody, a nothing who had risen to power only because he was connected to Jesus, now denies the one who raised him. And it’s not just that he did at one time, but he did it again and again, and the third time he did it, saying, “I don’t know this man.” The Bible says,

“Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times” (Mark 14:72).

When the rooster crowed Peter’s heart fell because he realized that Jesus was right about him. For the first time he didn’t want Jesus to be right, he didn’t want him to be right that he would deny Jesus publicly in front of everybody. And he broke down and had to leave.

“He went outside and wept bitterly” (Luke 22:62).

He went away ashamed, because now he is nothing, at least before he was a disciple, it gave him identity, it gave him fellowship, but now he’s alone after all of these years.

And it’s one thing to have a secret sin, but when your sin goes public, people act like they don’t sin. It’s not that you can’t still come around, but there’s that feeling of distance, they try to be nice, but you’re not part of that group that you were.

And it would be one thing if he denied a friend who died and stayed dead. But the problem with denying Jesus is that it’s not just denying Jesus that got crucified, denying Jesus that died, but he denied a Jesus who got up and rose again.

In fact, it was just a few days later when some women went down to the tomb on Sunday morning and saw an angel who told them,

“Go, tell his disciples… and Peter” (Mark 16:7).

He’s like, I don’t even know if you call him a disciple anymore, but go tell the disciples and Peter. I don’t know whether he is still in the group, whether they still talk to him or not, whether they accept him or not, but Jesus still has a plan for him. In other words, Jesus called Peter and he hadn’t given up on him.

Some of you listening may feel more like a consumer than a contributor, but the truth is that Jesus called you to be an asset and not a liability. He called you when your back was up against the wall, when you are involved in that scandal, when everybody was talking about you, and he said, “Peter, I want you back.” Tell Peter,

“He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you” (Mark 16:7).

I know, some of you have made a wrong turn, you got off track, you got yourself in a mess. And I don’t know what you did or where you are, you may not even know how you got there, because you’ve been keeping yourself busy with all kinds of busyness, but you know that you’re not living for your life’s purpose. You’ve just been going along with the crowd, but Jesus warned us saying,

“Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it” (Matthew 7:13).

There are some of you who recognize that you’ve gotten off course, you got off track, somewhere along the way you got on the wrong road, and Jesus has a message for you. This is what he said,

“Enter through the narrow gate… Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

He’s calling you back, he still wants you, and until you get on the narrow road that leads to life your heart is going to ache because he didn’t call you to circle aimlessly. You were supposed to be going somewhere, doing something, because God was going to use your life, but something got you off track.

And today I want to encourage you, like Peter, if you have enough revelation to know that Jesus is the Christ, that there is no other name, then you have enough knowledge to know that you are on the wrong road, you’re off course, and you can still get back on the right road. I want you to know that it’s not too late, you haven’t messed up too bad, your destiny hasn’t been aborted, because God doesn’t change his mind. God loves you, he’s not ashamed of you, and he knew you were going to mess up before you even messed up. In fact, he said,

“God's gifts and his call are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29).

And so, when he called you the first time, he knew that you would get lost along the way, he knew this was going to happen, but he didn’t change his mind about you. And he still loves you, he loves you with an everlasting love.

Let’s pray.

Pastor John Talcott

Christ’s Community Church

303 West Lincoln Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

April 2, 2023

(301) 447-4224

[www.cccaog.org](http://www.cccaog.org)

*Graphics, notes, and commentary from LifeChurch, Ministry Pass, PC Study Bible, Preaching Library, and Sermon Central. Scripture from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.*