

**Seedling Group Questions for Palm Sunday
(April 5, 2020)**

The sermon can be found at www.lipstosing.wordpress.com

Questions for Opening Up

Do you remember the last occasion on which you were in a large crowd? Where were you and who were you with?

How have you been able to continue to “gather” with people during our time of sheltering in place? What means or technology has made this possible?

Read Philippians 2:5-11

Joseph suggests that one thing it means for us to “have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus” is that we can trust God in the way Jesus trusted God. Do you think this is the primary meaning or are there other insights this image communicates to us?

Paul says that the cross is the chief way we see Jesus’ humility and obedience to God but are there some other ways we see Jesus’ identity as a servant which are meaningful and instructive for you?

Read Matthew 21:1-11

Even taking into consideration that Jesus is enacting the words of the Prophet Zechariah (9:9 and 14:4-9), this is a different kind of coronation. What do you make of the imagery here and Jesus’ choice of a donkey and colt?

What connections do you make from this passage and its inclusion in the liturgy of Holy Communion, when we sing these words: “Hosanna in the Highest,” as we celebrate the Meal?

Putting Things Together

What do you think the city of Jerusalem was primarily “shaken” about? Worry about the political implications of an impending uprising led by this new prophet? Being unready for the arrival of the new king? Was there a sense that this long-awaited promise was too good to be true? Something else entirely?

Joseph says in his sermon, “Jesus persists to be with us when our world is shaken, when our cries of celebration turn to cries of disappointment, when our expectations of our own self-reliance dissolve into an awareness of deep need, when our supposed self-sufficiency falls away and we realize our weakness...but Jesus comes for just one reason: to be with us. And today, wherever we are God calls forth from us our praise to Jesus, even as the world shakes.” Have any of the illusions of this world evaporated for you during this crisis? What has this crisis made you aware of in a new way?

Making It Personal

What does it mean for you that Jesus knew all that he would endure in the week following this episode and yet he persisted for you and for the world?

New Testament Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
⁶who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

¹When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying 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. ³If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” ⁴This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

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.”

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The 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!”

¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”