

When Jesus Rode Into Jerusalem

March 25, 2018, Palm Sunday

What is Jesus doing in Jerusalem? He is there to celebrate the Passover with his disciples and family. What does he see, feel, and touch in Jerusalem? He sees great buildings, billowing smoke from constant burnt sacrifices, a multitude of poor and bedraggled people, and a few well-fed and powerful persons.

Some are priests and scribes, some work for Herod's palace, some work for Caiaphas' temple, while others work for Pilate's court. 3 rings of power in Jesus's day in Jerusalem, usually in opposition of one another, come together for a common purpose in our story, to suppress the unrest that is rising in the wake of a young Galilean teacher from Nazareth.

I wonder what the thousands of students saw in Washington DC yesterday? What did they feel? Who did they touch? I wonder what any of us might see these days? A government divided in two, three, maybe more competing forces, seeking power for their own.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, he was powerless. And yet his words, his death, his influence remain with us today. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, he intended to be a pilgrim. Instead, he suffered martyrdom. Jesus dies because he was not silent, he was not complicit, he was not afraid. Jesus died because the centers of power in all lands, in every generation, become corrupt, and require the message of justice, peace, and responsibility.

The church in every age and nation are called to engage the powers of their day and land with the same prayers of compassion, the same cries for justice, the same challenges to the seats of corrupted power. Jesus was not self-interested, and we too must resist the temptation to live, to vote, and to defend, only, our own self-interests.

We are called, as the church, to be advocates for those for whom the system is naturally biased against. And we are to be prophetic to those who sit in the seats of power and influence. And we are to be a sanctuary for the alien, a meal for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, wellness for the sick, and a partner for the powerless.

This is who Jesus was, we just read the story. One who told those who had two to give one to he who had none. One who told the one who was owed to forgive the debt if possible, and especially if it was not payable. One who had gained much to give much, and to those who had just a little, to not fear, to still give, even if a little, and watch the blessing come to you.

Jesus in his day did not use his unique powers and gifts for his own sake, but to be a neighbor to Samaritans, to be a help to the cursed, a blessing. To be wellness to the disease, to be a companion to the widow, and to be a father to the orphan. He fed the

hungry, he prayed for the sick, he brought new life where death had descended, and when death befell him, he rose again with renewed life.

As the church, this is our calling. We have an opportunity to offer the same support, in life, in intervention Jesus freely gave in his own day. May we have the faith, the hope, and the love to do so.

Amen