

“THIS IS THE ONE!”

**A SERMON BASED ON THE GOSPEL OF
MATTHEW (21:1-11) AND PRESENTED FOR
ORLEAN UMC ON MARCH 28, 2021----PALM
SUNDAY**

**MOST YEARS PALM SUNDAY TENDS TO FOCUS
ON THE PALMS..... *BUT NOT THIS YEAR.....***

**NOW----AS YOU KNOW -----THERE ARE
DIFFERENT WORSHIP VARIETIES AND
APPROACHES TO PALM SUNDAY WITHIN THE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH....AND OTHER
CHURCHES FOR THAT MATTER----BASED ON SIZE
AND WORSHIP STYLE AND ANY NUMBER OF
OTHER VARIABLES-----**

**BUT NOT THIS YEAR..... FOR MOST OF OUR
UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES THIS YEAR
THERE WILL BE NO PALM PROCESSION.....
CONGREGATIONS WILL NOT BE WAVING THEIR
PALMS AND CHILDREN MIGHT EVEN CEASE
SWORD FIGHTS WITH THEIRS.....CHOIR AND
CONGREGATIONAL PROCESSIONALS ARE
UNLIKELY-----IN FACT HUMMING OUR FAVORITE
PALM SUNDAY HYMNS MAY WELL BE THE BEST
THAT WE CAN DO-----**

**WE REMEMBER ALL TOO WELL THAT OUR
CHURCHES WERE TOTALLY CLOSED DURING
THE EASTER SEASON IN 2020-----AND WE ARE
VERY GRATEFUL THAT WE ARE HERE TODAY ON
PALM SUNDAY 2021.....**

**BUT.....WE KNOW THAT THIS SERVICE IS NOT
LIKE THOSE IN 2019 AND ALL THE YEARS THAT
WENT BEFORE.....AT LEAST DURING THESE 17
YEARS THAT I HAVE STOOD IN THIS PULPIT AND
SHARED PALM SUNDAY WITH ALL OF YOU.....**

**IN FACT ALL OF HOLY WEEK WILL BE DIFFERENT
THIS YEAR.....AGAIN DEPENDING ON THE
CHURCH -----**

**WE WON'T BE WASHING FEET. WE WON'T EAT
BREAD TOGETHER OR SHARE THE SAME
CUP.....OUR MAUNDY THURSDAY MEAL WILL
NOT BE SHARED..... AND WE WON'T GATHER IN
THE DARK ON GOOD FRIDAY TO EXTINGUISH
THOSE TENEBRAE CANDLES AS THE STORY OF
JESUS' SACRIFICE UNFOLDS BEFORE US AND
CULMINATES IN THE STARK SINGING OF THE VIA
DOLOROSA.....**

**YES----- IT IS TRUE THAT HOLY WEEK AND
EASTER WILL NOT HAPPEN IN THE CHURCH THIS
YEAR LIKE THEY HAVE IN PREVIOUS YEARS.**

***BUT THE TRUTH IS THEY NEVER DID HAPPEN IN
THE CHURCH..... THEY ALWAYS HAPPEN IN THE
CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LIVES. AND THIS YEAR
THAT'S ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER
AND HANG ON TO.***

THIS YEAR THE PANDEMIC IS OUR HOLY WEEK.

**IT WILL ALSO BE THE PLACE FROM WHICH NEW
LIFE ARISES. THIS YEAR THE GIFTS, GRACE,
LOVE, AND POWER OF HOLY WEEK AND EASTER
COME TO US, NOT IN SPITE OF THE PANDEMIC,
BUT THROUGH IT..... *AND IT BEGINS TODAY.***

SO WHAT IS PALM SUNDAY WITHOUT PALMS
AND A PROCESSION? WITHOUT MUSIC? AND
ALL THE TRADITIONS AND TAPESTY OF THE
LOCAL CHURCH-----I WONDERED AND THOUGHT
ABOUT THAT QUESTION AS I PREPARED FOR
TODAY..... AND HERE'S MY ANSWER:

**IT'S PALM SUNDAY. IT'S STILL PALM
SUNDAY.**

I'M NOT BEING FLIPPANT..... I MEAN THAT IN A
DEEP AND PROFOUND WAY..... **PALM SUNDAY IS
NOT ABOUT THE PALMS AND THE PROCESSION
AND THE MUSIC AND THE TRADITIONS..... IT
NEVER WAS.**

***IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT JESUS ENTERING
JERUSALEM. AND TODAY WE'RE ALL
JERUSALEM.***

HERE'S WHY I SAY THAT:

***“WHEN [JESUS] ENTERED JERUSALEM, THE
WHOLE CITY WAS IN TURMOIL.”***

**TURMOIL. IT'S IN THE NEWS. IT'S IN THE AIR. IT'S
IN OUR HEARTS. TODAY OUR WORLD IS IN
TURMOIL. AMERICA IS IN TURMOIL. THE UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH IS IN TURMOIL. I FEEL THE
TURMOIL IN MY LIFE AND I'LL BET YOU FEEL IT IN
YOURS. LIKE I SAID, TODAY WE'RE ALL
JERUSALEM.**

ACCORDING TO MATTHEW'S GOSPEL ---- "THE WHOLE CITY WAS IN TURMOIL ASKING, "WHO IS THIS?" "THE CROWDS WERE SAYING, 'THIS IS THE PROPHET JESUS OF NAZARETH IN GALILEE.'" YES IT IS. BUT I THINK THERE IS MORE TO BE SAID. SO I WANT TO ADD A FEW THINGS.

- THIS IS THE ONE GOD SENT BECAUSE GOD "SO LOVED THE WORLD."
- THIS IS THE ONE WHO PROMISES, "WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED IN MY NAME, I AM THERE AMONG THEM."

- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO SAYS, “COME TO ME, ALL YOU THAT ARE WEARY AND CARRYING BURDENS, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.”**
- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO SAYS, “PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU.”**
- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO SAYS, “DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED, AND DO NOT LET THEM BE AFRAID.”**
- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO SAYS, “I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD.”**
- **THIS IS THE ONE “WHO CALLS HIS OWN SHEEP BY NAME AND LEADS THEM OUT.”**
- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO SAYS, “I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.”**

- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO SAYS, “I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.”**
- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO COMES THAT WE “MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT ABUNDANTLY.”**
- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO IS “MAKING ALL THINGS NEW.”**
- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO EMBODIES GOD’S PROMISE, “I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU OR FORSAKE YOU.”**
- **THIS IS THE ONE WHO SAYS, “REMEMBER, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE END OF THE AGE.”**

I HOPE YOU HEAR THE ECHOES OF EASTER IN
THE LIST OF WHO THIS ONE IS BECAUSE I'M
GOING TO ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING.....

*I WANT YOU TO LOOK AROUND AT EVERYTHING
THAT IS HAPPENING..... I WANT YOU TO LOOK AT
WHAT IS HAPPENING WITHIN YOURSELF. I WANT
YOU TO PAY ATTENTION AND TAKE IT ALL IN. IT
WILL BE DIFFICULT AND PAINFUL; HOLY WEEK
ALWAYS IS.*

**WHATEVER YOUR HOLY WEEK IS – WHATEVER IT
BRINGS YOU, TAKES FROM YOU, OR ASKS OF
YOU – IT ALREADY RESOUNDS WITH THE
ECHOES OF EASTER. THAT’S ALWAYS THE
TENSION IN HOLY WEEK. IT’S THE TENSION IN
OUR LIVES. AND IT WAS THE TENSION IN JESUS’
LIFE.**

**SO KEEP AWAKE AND BE READY. DO NOT FOR
ONE MINUTE CLOSE YOUR EYES OR TURN AWAY
FROM YOUR HOLY WEEK, BECAUSE THIS ONE
WHO ENTERS THE TURMOIL OF JERUSALEM,
THIS “ONE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE
LORD” – THIS IS THE ONE WHO WILL RISE TO
NEW LIFE ON THE THIRD DAY.**

AND HE PLANS ON TAKING YOU WITH HIM.

PRAISE GOD AND MAY IT BE SO FOR YOU AND

FOR ME.....AMEN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!