

Lessons for the Sunday of the Passion**April 2, 2023****Processional:** John 12:12-19 ~ *The Triumphal Entry of the Lord's Messiah into Jerusalem*Psalm 118:19-29 ~ *This hymn of thanksgiving anticipates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.*or Psalm 31:9-16 ~ *From the cross Jesus prayed David's plea to God for deliverance from enemies.*Isaiah 50:4-9a ~ *Behold, the Lord God helps me; who will declare me guilty?*Philippians 2:5-11 ~ *At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bend and every tongue confess him Lord.*Matthew 26:1-27:66 ~ *The account of our Lord's passion*or Matthew 27:11-66 (*shortened alternative*)**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** "In Lowly Pomp, Ride on to Die!"

Traditionally Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but already the lessons look forward to His Passion or suffering and death. As in Isaiah's third Servant Song, Jesus "set His face like flint" against the suffering that lay ahead of Him beyond the palm branches and hosannas. Having taken the form of a servant, Jesus humbled Himself even to death on the cross. By His obedient sacrifice for the sins of all the world, He is proclaimed Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord Jesus, most humble King, with songs of praise I welcome you! Yet, like the crowds in Jerusalem so long ago, I would like to see you rule without the suffering of the cross. Help me embrace the crucifixion as your gift of love to me and all sinners. Help me be a faithful witness to your death for the redemption of the world. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: The greatest blessings in our lives are not the material things we work so hard to have, but rather the relationships that express and are fulfilled by love. Jesus has filled our lives with his love as he humbled himself to lift us up. Whatever we can do to share his love is done with bended knee and praising tongue.

OFFERING PRAYER: With bending knee and praising tongue, O Lord,
Enable us to bless Your holy name,
And with these gifts, ease burdens that are hard,
So all may know that Christ has borne our blame. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: With the crowds in the streets of Jerusalem and the courtyard of Pilate's Praetorium, we are too easily influenced by personal advantage, and willingly sacrifice integrity and compassion for power and prestige. For our advantage, Jesus willingly sacrificed power and position to exercise integrity and practice compassion. We are promised that His blood is upon us to make us holy in God's sight!

Questions to Consider: What greater contrast between triumphal entry and crucifixion?

- How can you bring the processional triumph together with the passion narrative?
- What makes the Lord's Servant able to bear suffering and disrespect?
- What does St Paul mean that our attitude should be the same as that of Jesus?
- Since Matthew wrote primarily to Jews, why did he make them guilty of Jesus' blood?

Bonus on next page: An exploration of the humility and exaltation of Jesus

The Mind of Christ

He knew He didn't have to grasp the hand
that once had formed a lump of reddish clay,
and held it mouth to mouth to make it stand,
and birthed a life, and sparked the light of day.
He took the shape of dust instead. He cried --
and gulped moist air that smelled like stable hay.
He gripped his mother's finger as she tried
to wipe the birth blood from His face away.
He set his mind to serve, and serving, died;
and faithful even on the cross, He gave
His spirit up to God the Father's side;
in dying, conquered death and burst the grave!
Now every knee on earth shall be bent low
And every tongue confess that Christ is Lord!

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