Palm/Passion Sunday – March 29, 2026

Matthew 21:1-11 and Matthew 26:14—27:66

Yesterday's Installation celebration seemed like a fitting one to lead into Palm Sunday! We even had a processional Coming down the aisle. With the bishop in his full regalia behind me. We just needed a donkey and some palms. Well, and Jesus. Me nor the bishop want to be conflated to Jesus status. But quickly, things are going to be changing. That celebratory feeling we've been riding, by the end of this service, we're going to be fully ready to enter into Holy Week. Just in today's service, in the next half hour, and then again over this next week, we're going to go from this joyous celebration as Jesus enters into Jerusalem that we celebrated that first Palm Sunday. And then, all the way to betrayal on Thursday, the cross on Friday, and the empty tomb in a week.

We're in for a wild ride, but we at least know the ending. Imagine, almost 2000 years ago experiencing this next week in person. The ups and downs, the joys and sorrows and anger. Being a townsperson who has heard of what Jesus had done. Finally had some hope knowing that the Messiah had arrived.

And then enter Jesus. On a donkey... ok, that's odd, but cool.. The first thing he does is go to the temple and flip over tables, drive out the money changers, and started causing issues. He proclaims he can destroy the temple and rebuild it in 3 days. And people not realizing that he was talking about himself, become more agitated Particularly the chief priests and elders. And so when the time came and the people gathered for the Passover festival tradition of releasing a prisoner, it didn't take much for the townsfolk to be convinced that Jesus was a bad guy, and they ask for Barabbas to be released, instead of Jesus. Even Pilate was dumbfounded at their logic.

How quickly things changed from Sunday to Friday. Today, we're going to move quickly into the passion part of our service. We just rejoiced and celebrated that our savior has come into town. And soon we will hear the same crowds who laid down the palms and cloaks now chanting "Crucify him." These combination

palm/passion services are a new construct in the history of the church. And while some criticize that we lose out on a full Palm Sunday celebration, I've begun to appreciate how the service has a drastic shift.

Because it emphasizes how quickly it all changed for Jesus and his followers. How they watched their Lord be worshipped and celebrated one day. And just a few days later, killed. We go through those same emotions in our service today. We will experience the same timeline this week. May we live into all of that. Experience these highs and lows. But we have one advantage over the folks 2000 years ago. We know what will happen next Sunday. Let us continue on the journey to the cross. Amen.