

SERMON - PALM SUNDAY - 28 MARCH 2010  
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

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Matthew 27:21-22 (KJV)

*The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. [22] Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.*

Pilate's decision. This week's, Holy Week, readings are packed with decisions.

First, there was the decision that Jesus made to enter into Jerusalem although he knew that it meant certain death for him. There was the decision by those who welcomed him to give him a triumphant entry into the city.

There was the decision to clear the temple of the moneychangers, putting him further at odds with the establishment.

There was the decision by Judas Iscariot to sell out Jesus. There was the agonizing decision made by Jesus at Gethsemane to obey the Father's will.

Then there was the decision made by the Chief Priests to arrest Jesus, to bring him to trial even though they knew their witnesses were false and would perjure themselves.

There was Peter's decision to deny Christ.... Three times before the rooster crowed that morning.

There was the decision made by the Roman guards to humiliate and torture Jesus over and above what they were ordered.

There was the decision made by the ruling authorities to maintain the status quo and to manipulate the crowds, the same people who had welcomed Jesus into the city, into a

frenzied mob to accomplish their purpose. Matthew 27:23 (KJV) *And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.*

There was the decision by Pilate to go ahead and order Jesus to be crucified. Matthew 27:24-25 (KJV) *When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. [25] Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.*

Decisions. The Passion Narratives are full of decisions. Our lives are full of decisions.

It is how we make those decisions that counts, that matters.

As Christians, we are called to be different, to be different in our actions, in our decisions, in how we live our lives.

We are called to a life-style that is gentle and kind; a lifestyle that reflects God's love, not anger, rancor, and recrimination. We are not to judge others. Matthew 7:1 (KJV) *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

We have to live in the world but we do not have to act as the world does.

In short, our way of life, our actions, should preach the Gospel; simply, quietly and gently.

We are now coming into Holy Week, the last week of Lent. We, by now, should have made some difference in how we relate to God, how we live our lives in the light of our relationship with God.

If we have not accomplished that goal, there is still time, but not much time.

We should have made some changes that we will take with us for a lifetime.

Our goal should be to spread the Kingdom of God, not our own agendas. We should always make sure that what we are doing is what Jesus would have us do. I know I make fun of the WWJD motto, saying it really means “We Want Jack Daniels,” but seriously folks we should remember that we are always walking in the light of God and that we should reflect that to others.

In this world of “Me’ism” with it’s philosophy of unbridled greed, with it’s anger and shouting, with it’s polarizing attitude if you don’t agree with me and my viewpoint then you are no good, in this world of “ME FIRST,” we, as Christians, should stand out in our compassion and our concern for others, for the common good, not for some ideology.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:9 (KJV) *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

He also said, Matthew 5:5 (KJV) *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*

Paul also tells us in Romans 12:18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

This week, this week that we call Holy Week, we are reminded again of the sacrifice that God made for us, the sacrifice of the Cross.

That sacrifice was made out of love, the most supreme love that ever was, not so that we could be rich and powerful, so that we could ignore the needs of millions of others just to satisfy ourselves and our wants.

That sacrifice was made to eliminate our sins.

And to reflect that sacrifice, we should reflect that love, that divine love in all that we do, in all that we say, and in all that we are.

Otherwise we are failing, not just ourselves, but God as well.

Jesus tells us that we are to feed the hungry, to visit the sick, to take care of others.  
Matthew 25:37-40 (KJV) *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? [38] When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? [39] Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? [40] And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

This means in all ways that we can, we are to provide for those less fortunate, through the Church, through our governments and as individuals.

Christ died for not just us “frozen chosen” but for all of us on this somewhat battered and fragile planet earth.

Amen.

