

What a wonderful celebration! Palms, music, smiles and is nice with sunshine! Was it like this for Jesus? (I will bet he was a bit warmer) He was coming to Jerusalem with one set of expectations and the people in the street were greeting Him with a completely different agenda. And there was a different set of expectations with the Sanhedrin. Palm Sunday brings the whole story of Jesus to a real life climax.

If we think about expectations, let's take the part of the people first. They have heard about Jesus; his fame precedes him. Some feel He is coming to Jerusalem for them to crown him a king. They truly believed He was the Messiah. They are lauding his name and the power he has shown through his miracle filled ministry. They are cheering and laying down palms and clothing in his path. There were some Jews who are not quite so sure. In John 11 it says ⁴⁵Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, (Jesus Had raised Lazarus from the dead) believed in him. ⁴⁶But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. " .

The Sanhedrin and the powers of Jerusalem wanted to find a way to silence the powerful image that Jesus had created with the people. Some temple officials followed him throughout his ministry and seemed to be a bit afraid of him Their questions had not stumped him and they could not catch him committing blasphemy so they could arrest him. He has not fallen into their traps; yet here He is on their doorstep. They had a meeting after the people came to tell them about Lazarus and decided if he continued to gain in power, and continued his ministry the Romans would come to destroy them and the temple. They decided they had to destroy Him..

Jesus expectations were a bit different. He came into this picture with a mandate from God. He was aware of what is going to happen. He had built a great relationship with those closest to him and he expected them to stand by him in the coming ordeal.

The disciples have been told again and again what was going to happen to Jesus , but,,,,,did they get it????? Were they ready to have the story unfold the way it did? we heard the passion read today; the answer to that question is very obvious.

One of my favorite things to do at this time of year is to see the stage play "Jesus Christ Superstar". If I cannot get to a live performance, I will watch the movie version at home. I think it gives a great impression of the chaos and struggle that the characters in this drama went thru. The music is great and if you listen to the words of the songs you get the whole story of Holy week and Jesus' death. It is an entertaining way to hear see what we hear in our gospel today.

I don't think we are expecting to be entertained today. We are here to worship God and hear of his great love for us. The great love he showed us in Jesus his son; the great love that Jesus showed thru his sacrifice and ministry as a human being here on earth. We are beginning Holy week; we get to slow down and be part of the story. We know what to expect, we have heard the story again and again. But if we listen carefully with a heart that is open to God, the story may speak to us in a new way. It may surprise us.

One thing we have done in our Lenten study has been a bit of Lectio Divina. That is an ancient type of bible reading and study. There are more modern versions like African Bible study that people use but it is basically reading a passage from the Bible several times and finding how it speaks to us. It is a way to slow down, to hear every word; to really open our ears and our minds and our hearts to hear God's

word in a way that has an impact on us as individuals. It would be a good way to look at our scripture today. It is quite long and it is very familiar to us. We listen with our ears but are our minds and hearts involved also? When we read it as a drama, do you hear it differently? I hope something did startle you like you heard it for the first time.

Have any of you followed the Bishop's Lenten Bible Study on Facebook? On Wednesday they discussed this passage. One thing was mentioned that stood out for the guest, Karen Anderson, was the mob mentality of the whole scene. How quickly all went from Joy and Hosannas to Crucify Him. I wonder if could I have been one of the folks in that crowd. Our Palm Sunday service is like that we have hosannas and joy and palms and leave in silence, ready for Holy week.

Where do we go from here? What is Expected of us? How do we take this into our homes and our workday world? I guess we listen well, carry the message in our hearts and minds, attend services as we can and to be immersed in the whole story together and be ready for a joyous Easter. We answer any questions someone else may ask; invite someone else to come to church, especially on Easter. We never know how God is going to speak to someone, it may be through any one of us.

Hymn 550 verses 1,4,5