

Palm Sunday 2019

Sermon text is from the 12th chapter of John's Gospel,
"THE HOUR HAS COME FOR THE SON OF MAN TO BE GLORIFIED.
TRULY, TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS A GRAIN OF WHEAT FALLS
INTO THE EARTH AND DIES, IT REMAINS ALONE; BUT IF IT DIES, IT
BEARS MUCH FRUIT."

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. It sure seems that way, doesn't it? Today is the day when Jesus rides into Jerusalem and it looks glorious because people are waving palm branches and crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel (v. 13)." Jesus sits on the back of a donkey and rides into town – it sure looks glorious. But, it's not at all what Jesus is talking about when He says, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." The hour of His glorification doesn't have anything to do with riding into Jerusalem amid the accolades of the crowd. Nor, is it like what we saw a few weeks ago on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The hour of Jesus' glory looks like this: He's in the upper room. He takes off His outer garment, takes a basin of water and washes His disciples' feet. Foot washing – looks like something a servant would do, because that's what a servant does. Doesn't look very glorious.

After He washes His disciples' feet, He sits at the table with them. And, he's sorrowful because He knows one of them will betray Him. He announces one who shares bread with Him will betray Him and He gives a piece of bread to Judas Iscariot and Jesus says to Him, "What you are going to do, do quickly (Jn 12:27)." Foot washing and betrayal – it doesn't look very glorious.

As Jesus leaves that room, He says this to His disciples, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him,

God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come' (13:31-33)." You cannot go with Jesus in His hour of glory because his hour of glory is a lonesome hour. There He goes, out to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Along comes Judas Iscariot, His betrayer, along with a crowd, a crowd with swords and clubs. They lay their hands on Jesus, arrest Him, and all the disciples flee. Like He said, "Where I am going you cannot come."

There He goes, taken by the crowd into the High Priest's palace. Now Peter follows, he follows into the courtyard and sits by the fire to warm himself, but three times people ask him about Jesus and three times, he denies it. And then Peter no longer goes where Jesus is going. He weeps bitterly. But Jesus remains in His hour of glory.

It continues as he is taken before the Jewish Council and they try Him on the charge of blasphemy. They convict Him of that charge and they say He has to die because He claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God, which He really is but that didn't matter to them. They just want to be rid of Him because He didn't meet their expectations. They mock Him and spit on Him. Finally, after making the decision that Jesus should die, they have to send Him off to the Romans, because the Romans are in town and that means they don't have the authority to put anyone to death.

So they send Him off to a man who can put Him to death, Pontius Pilate and Pilate examines Jesus and finds no reason to put Him to death. But the Jews keep stirring up the people in the crowd. When Pilate learns that He is a Galilean, he sends Him over to Herod and the story is much the same. The hour of glory continues as He is mocked and ridiculed and

slapped and then is sent back to Pilate. Pilate examines Him once more and declares, I find no reason to put this man to death. And yet, he also found no reason to deny the cries of the people. They cried out that Barabbas, a murderer, an insurrectionist, should be released and that Jesus should be crucified. Pilate honored their request, so Barabbas goes free and Jesus goes to Golgotha.

When He gets to Golgotha, He is stripped of His garments, nails are driven through His hands and His feet, and He is lifted up upon a cross. There He hangs. As He hangs on that cross, God the Father does to Him what all His friends have done to Him -- He abandons Him as well. He hangs upon that cross and dies. When He's dead, a spear is thrust into His side and the water and the blood flow.

Joseph of Arimathea comes and asks Pilate for the body of Jesus. Pilate grants the request. The body of Jesus is taken off the cross, Joseph places it in a tomb in which no one has ever laid, and a stone is rolled in front of it to seal His tomb.

That's the hour of Jesus' glory. Jesus' hour of glory is the hour in which He is betrayed; in which He is arrested, abandoned, tried, crucified, died, and buried. This is the hour of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He told us that. He said this about His hour, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit (12:24)." It bears much fruit for you.

You are so much like the people we heard this morning. There you are with you palm branches in your hands, welcoming Him, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" That's you. You're also like Judas and Peter, Pilate and Herod. You betray and abandon and deny and mock and ridicule the Lord Jesus with

your sinful thoughts, words, and deeds. You're like the ruling Jewish council who wants to be rid of Jesus because He doesn't meet your expectations of what He should do for you as God, as the Messiah. So often you are like the Romans, who rejected Jesus and said we don't really want anything to do with Him because He's not really that important to us. So often, you are like these sinful people because you are, in and of yourself, sinful.

But it is the glory of Jesus Christ to take your sins upon Himself. It is the glory of Jesus Christ to serve you by suffering all that you deserve for your sins. When He suffers the betrayal and the abandonment and the mockery and ridicule and the flogging, when He is crucified upon the cross, that is what you deserved for all of your sins. But, it is the glory of Jesus that He suffers for you. He gives His life into death for you. He dies upon the cross as the sacrifice for your sins and, on the 3rd day, He rises again.

By His suffering, death, and resurrection, He becomes that grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies to bear much fruit. The fruit that He bears is this: It doesn't matter if you are a Jew or Greek, or you are a Roman or an American, it doesn't matter how big your sin is or how small you may think your sin to be, it doesn't matter because Christ Jesus bore it all for you on the cross. His suffering, His death, His resurrection has wiped it all away, such that you have forgiveness of sins, and where there is forgiveness, there is life and salvation.

And you have this forgiveness, life, and salvation poured upon you in the water and Word of Holy Baptism; it is planted into your ears and heart and mind in the preaching of God's Word; you eat it and drink it as you eat and drink the life-giving body and blood of Christ, given and shed for you.

Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit (12:24).” The glory of our Lord Jesus Christ is His suffering, death, and resurrection for you, which forgives you all your sin and gives eternal life. That’s the fruit Jesus bears by His hour of glory for you, Dear Child of God.