

Palm Sunday 3/29/2026

Sermon Text is our Passion Reading from the 27th chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

Wanna get away? That was the marketing phrase for Southwest Airline TV commercials a few years back. You may remember them – the guy busy talking on his on his cell phone who gets into the back seat of a car. Suddenly, he is squeezed between two masked robbers, and realizes he's in a get-away car, not an Uber. Then comes the tag line, "Wanna get away?"

The frantic guy who says to the 4-star General, "General, we've had a breach, we need your password to stop it," as the entire system flashes on the wall behind them. Slowly, and under his breath, the General spells out his password, "ihatemyjob1". And you hear the tag line, "Wanna get away?"

The harried lady traveler in the busy airport suddenly having contact lense troubles – anyone who has ever worn contact lenses can relate to that one. She rushes into the nearest bathroom, fixes her contact lense in the mirror, and sees that she us surrounded by men because she inadvertently went into the wrong restroom. And you hear the line, "Wanna get away?"

Today, as we ponder Jesus' passion, we find ourselves asking if Jesus just wanted to get away from a whole lot of people. Take a look at that Palm Sunday crowd.

There are the chief priests, elders of the people, and whole Jewish council. They are the ones who had conspired in secret to arrest Jesus and kill Him. They are the ones who sent the armed mob out to the Garden of Gethsemane to seize Jesus. They are the ones who tried Jesus with the help of false witnesses on trumped up charges to convict Him of

blasphemy, a crime He never committed. Ya, we think Jesus would wanna get away from them.

How about Judas Iscariot? He was one of the twelve. Jesus even called him, "*Friend*" (Mt 26:50). When the chief priests want to find a way to get rid of Jesus, Judas Iscariot betrays the Savior for 30 pieces of silver. He walks right up to Jesus, betrays Him with a kiss and a "Hail, Rabbi". With that, Jesus is seized by the crowd with swords and clubs. We are so disgusted that that guy that when he goes out and hangs himself in guilt and falls and his belly bursts open and his insides run out, our instinct is to say he got what he deserved. We would think Jesus would love to get away from that guy.

Then you have Peter. In the upper room, Jesus tells the twelve they will all fall away, and Peter blows his own horn, "Nope. Not me. I will never fall away." From Gethsemane, he does follow all the way to the courtyard of the high priest and goes right up to the fire to warm himself. But as soon as someone asked him, "Hey, weren't you with Jesus," he says, "I don't even know who the guy is." He does it not once, not twice, but three times, all before the rooster crows.

We dare not overlook the disciples. Remember in the upper room, when Peter boasted he would never fall away? Well, "All the disciples said the same"(Mt 26:35). Yet by the time they got to the Garden of Gethsemane, they can't even stay awake. And when the crowd shows up with swords and clubs, those guys who were never going to fall away from Jesus, are nowhere to be found. They're gone. They've run away from Jesus as fast as their little feet would go.

We can't let Pontius Pilate off the hook, can we? Has the power, he has the authority to set Jesus free, but he's a big coward so he decides to

go along with the crowd and do what they want. So, he sentences Jesus to death, washes his hands then piously says His blood be on you, because I – I – have nothing to do with it, even though he had everything to do with it.

Then there are the Roman soldiers. What do they do? Well, they mock Jesus, twist a crown of thorns into His scalp, strike Him on the head with a reed, spit on Him, and take Him to Calvary where they drive nails through His hands and feet. Then to see if He's dead, they drive a spear into His side.

So ya, there a lot of people that Jesus should just wanna get away from. I invite you to take a good look at the crowd and know what you see? You see **you**. You've betrayed Jesus. You promised never to leave Him. You vowed that you would suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from the Jesus, and you've denied Him; you've run away from Him as fast as your little feet would go. You've stood in judgment of Jesus, when He didn't do things your way. You've even washed your hands of Jesus, to please the world.

The GOOD NEWS is that Jesus doesn't go away. In fact, He rides on. He rides on to Jerusalem and when He get there, you see exactly what it is you deserve for your sins. When you see your Lord being betrayed, when you see Him being abandoned, when you see Him being denied, understand that is what you deserve for all the times you have betrayed, abandoned, and denied your friends and for all the times you have failed to love your neighbor was yourself. When you see your Lord Jesus standing on trial for blasphemy, when you see Him convicted, condemned, sentenced to death, understand this: that is the sentence you deserve for your blasphemy, for all the times you failed to put God first in your life and

your breaking of His commandment to have other gods. You are guilty of that and that is what you deserve.

When you see your Lord Christ being spat upon, punched in the face, struck with a reed, understand that is what your sins deserve. For your wretchedness and wickedness, your flesh deserves to be crowned with thorns and thrust with a spear.

This is what you deserve for your sins. Understand that it was your sins that put Him there. Your sins caused His crucifixion. When you see Him upon that cross and you hear Him cry out, "*My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?*", that is the damnation that you deserve for all your sins (Mt 27:46). That is the wrath of God falling on His only-begotten Son for what you have done – your thoughts, words, and deeds. And when you see Him die upon that cross, understand that should be you dying for all your sins.

But to terrified, horrified, condemned sinners like you, the Scriptures speak, *the LORD has lain on Him the iniquity of us all (Is 53:6). He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed (I Pe 2:24).*

When you see your Lord Jesus hanging dead upon that cross and His lifeless body buried in the tomb, rejoice! Be glad! For it is Jesus Himself who went to Calvary bearing your sin upon His own body. He went there freely of His own will to give His life as a ransom for you. He rides on in love for us poor, miserable sinners. It's His blood shed upon that cross that washes away your sin. It's His death that has paid the price of all your sins. It's His dying that has freed you from all your sins and the wrath of God upon them. And the Lord's resurrection has swallowed up all your sins, so that you are completely and totally forgiven.

The Good News for you, Dear Child of God, is that He doesn't go away, but rather He comes to you by the water and Word of your Baptism – [as He did for Leon and Clarissa this morning](#) -- by hearing and learning of His holy Word, by the eating and drinking of His body and blood, to deliver to you the forgiveness, life, and salvation that He won for you when He rode on into Jerusalem.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.