

Pastor Roy's message from Palm Sunday - April 9, 2017

As we listen to Matthew's account of Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey to cries of "Hosanna to the Son of David!" I invite you to think of the procession of Jesus and his followers not only to celebrate Jesus, but also to protest against Roman Imperial power and against the Jerusalem elites. Jesus on a donkey is the alternative to Roman *and* local values on power and religion. And since protests were not allowed, this procession is a bit of a flash mob. It is no wonder that by the end of the week, he is on a cross. Jesus is inviting reform—humble faith which invites everyone to the table. Even today we are frightened by such a welcome as they were. In his ministry Jesus pushes back with welcome until he is silenced on the cross. We re-enter the story on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

Pastor Roy's sermon from Saturday, Vigil Service - April 15, 2017

Alleluia! The Lord is risen! (He is risen indeed, Alleluia)

Tonight we have followed the Hebrew/Jewish journey into salvation, into joy, into the light of God's merciful presence. Our ancestors forged a path of faith led by the Spirit. God provides for Abraham and Jacob and Joseph and all the children of God. They find themselves enslaved, longing for freedom. Salvation begins for them with Moses' willingness to say yes to God's call. He gathers the Hebrew children, they cross the Red Sea, into the wilderness for 40 years nourished by God's hand, manna and water from the rock. They enter the land of Promise. After Moses and Joshua, the charismatic judges lead by trial and error.

The faith of Israel is quite young. Then come the prophets and kings. Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah. Mighty nation states arise, they resist unsuccessfully and are pushed into exile where they make an identity for themselves in the synagogues in which they find their name and faith in one God. Some return to the land of promise only to be overtaken yet again, by Greeks, then by the Romans. A few more prophets pass by, but mostly charismatic rebels. The Word of the Lord is kept carefully.

Then comes Jesus, the faithful, the truthful, the compassionate, courageous rabbi who trusts in God. He has learned that his life is one with God's. And so he doesn't have to calculate when or how much to be faithful, he just lives and loves with abandon, set free from fear, by trust. He proclaims this true life which is never lost to all who will listen. And when he dies for love and justice, of course Jesus is raised. There is no death for those who understand what it means to be alive, who commune intimately with God.

We learn resurrection from the women at the tomb, who share their joy with the disciples who also became apostles and finally we learn what it means to be raised from all of the Saints. Resurrection is our hope, our ultimate hope.

Here is our life hidden with Christ in God. Resurrection is not something that happened 2000 years ago, and stopped when God hit the pause button. Resurrection is union with God.

Death seems to have the last word. But life grounded and sourced in God is always ganging up on this shadow existence called death. There is only life. Death is defeated. We follow our Lord into Life.

May we, this Easter rediscover our friend resurrection life, and contemplate her profound joy and all the ways our lives are enriched by her presence. We are mindful this night of her gift, seen in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! The Lord is risen! Amen.