

DIRT AND FLOWERS

A little boy was sick on Palm Sunday and stayed home from church with his mother.

His father returned from church holding a palm branch.

The little boy was curious and asked, "Why do you have that palm branch, dad?"

"You see, when Jesus came into town, everyone waved Palm Branches to honor him, so we got Palm Branches today."

The little boy replied, "Aw Shucks! The one Sunday I miss is the Sunday that Jesus shows up!"

This morning as many of you know today is Palm Sunday.

The day, taken from the Gospels, where a whole city threw a parade for Jesus.

As Jesus rode into the city, the people threw Palm branches in anticipation of his coming.

Thus, we get our word Palm Sunday.

This day marked a time of celebration where Jesus was the worshipped and praised.

This day is bittersweet for us because even as we read of the celebration, we know that Friday is coming, the cross is coming.

We know that many in this same crowd will within a few short days exchange words of praise to words of death.

Shouting Hosanna, Hosanna and then later shouting Crucify Him, Crucify Him.

This morning I want to focus our attention on two services both which focused upon Jesus, but with two different results.

If you have your bibles this morning turn with me to two passages one from the Gospel of Matthew and the other from the gospel of Luke.



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Turn first to Matthew chapter 27 beginning in verse 15.

Place your finger there and then turn to Luke chapter 19 beginning in verse 36.

The great evangelist, Billy Graham, has been quoted many times as saying that the greatest mission field in our country to today is in our local church, the people sitting already in our churches.

Now I am not sure whether this statement is true or not, but one thing that I do know is that many people know what to say, how to say it, even how to act in it, but when the rubber truly meets that road, there is no personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

No salvation- just empty words.

We see a perfect example of this in our two passages this morning.

On Sunday Jesus rode into the city with the people shouting praises and praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.

On Friday they are shouting give us Barabas, we want him, crucify Jesus crucify Him.

Why the change?

Well, there are many possible reasons, but one simple reason is that their words did not match their heart.

They possessed a casual not a committed faith.

They had religion but they missed the person Jesus... so how can we have a committed faith... how can we be real and sincere?

Consistent in all that we do... well this morning I want to offer you some keys to just such a faith.

I. A committed faith is not self-centered, \ it is Christ-Centered

This sounds obvious, but we often miss it.



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In America, we tend to say to God, " Hey God, here is my calendar, here is my agenda... Now I can squeeze you in here or here.

Pulling God out or turning to God only when it is convenient or useful.

In our passage, the people praised Jesus as He passed by, but many of them praised him for two reasons.

A. Because of his miracles.

He had healed the sick, raised the dead...They praised Him because he was serving them and

B. Because they saw in Jesus a way to be politically delivered from the Romans.

Their praise was tempered with the attitude of Jesus what can you do for me.

A few days later at the trial they saw a beaten and disfigured Jesus- A man who no longer looked like a deliverer or a conqueror.

And as words were said about him, they bought into all the lies and quickly changed their position.

For them it was all about Me, Me, Me.

There is a legend about an ancient village in Spain.

The villagers learned that the king would pay a visit!

In a thousand years, a king had never come to that village.

Excitement grew! "We must throw a big celebration,"

The villagers all agreed.

But, it was a poor village, and there weren't many resources.

Someone came up with a classic idea.

Since many of the villagers made their own wines, the idea was for everyone in the village bring a large cup of their choice wine to the town square, "We'll pour it into a large vat and offer it to the king for his pleasure!

When the king draws wine to drink, it will be the very best he's ever tasted!"

The day before the king's arrival, hundreds of people lined up to make their offering to the honored guest.

They climbed a small stairway and poured their gift through a small opening at the top.

Finally, the vat was full!

The King arrived, was escorted to the square, given a silver cup and was told to draw some wine, which represented the best the villagers had.

He placed the cup under the spigot, turned the handle, and then drank the wine, but it was nothing more than water.

You see every villager reasoned, "I'll withhold my best wine and substitute water, what with so many cups of wine in the vat, the king will never know the difference!"

The problem was, everyone thought the same thing, and the king was greatly dishonored.

Today, Palm Sunday 2021, choose to honor our great King, Jesus Christ by giving him our very best.

Withholding nothing... Giving him our all.

II. A committed faith is relationship driven.

Many of those who gathered to throw their coats and palm branches onto the street and who shouted praises did so because it was the popular thing to do at the time.

At that one brief moment it became trendy.



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Perhaps some began doing it with sincere motives, but others soon did it because others were doing it.

Later at the trial, shouting crucify Him was the thing to do... In fact for a brief moment, it was the trendy thing to do to make a mass murderer and criminal their hero when they shouted we want Barabas.

In our own lives a committed faith comes only through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

One where every day is fresh and new as he personally directs our steps.

In order to have a committed faith we have to develop and maintain a personal relationship with Jesus.

III. A committed faith is not negatively influenced by our personal trials and crises.

At the parade it was trendy to offer praise... everyone was doing it.. but At the trial to speak out for Jesus was risky...possibly even life threatening.

Many of us come to Jesus expecting everything to go well... maybe some slight bad but not too much of it... so, when the bottom drops out for us... we often ask God why?

Thinking it is not supposed to happen this way.

If our faith is based on our situations or circumstances it will never be committed... it will always be casual.

In my life I have gone to many big Christian events.

Many packed large stadiums... Where the praises for God rock the entire arena... Where everyone is praising...

When returning home while everyone is still glowing from the worship, I say guys it is easy to do that here, but tomorrow you face the hard task, can you do that in a world that is not all praising in fact a world that is mocking laughing and is often angry.

A committed faith takes the good with the bad.

Knowing that all we are ever promised is that in the midst of both our good and bad; Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us.

He will stand with us.

A story is told of A little girl who while walking in a garden noticed a particularly beautiful flower.

She admired its beauty and enjoyed its fragrance.

“It’s so pretty!” she exclaimed.

As she gazed on it, her eyes followed the stem down to the soil in which it grew.

“This flower is too pretty to be planted in such dirt!” she cried.

So she pulled it up by its roots and ran to the water faucet to wash away the soil.

It wasn’t long until the flower wilted and died.

When the gardener saw what the little girl had done, he exclaimed,

“You have destroyed my finest plant!”

“I’m sorry, but I didn’t like it in that dirt,” she said.

The gardener replied, “I chose that spot and mixed the soil because I knew that only there could it grow to be a beautiful flower.”

God has placed us exactly where we are.

We must trust him.

In the trusting We eventually see that He is using our pressures, trials, and difficulties to bring us to a new degree of spiritual beauty.

True contentment comes when we accept what God is doing and thank Him for it.

This morning is your faith casual or committed.

As we approach this week where our Jesus suffered incredibly for us.

In a week where our sins, past, present, and future were the nails that hung him on that cross doesn't Jesus deserve a better level of commitment.

Doesn't he deserve total control of your life?

Doesn't he deserve a deeper personal relationship with You?

This week consider it all... and choose to give it all to him...



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