

Mark 11:1-11 Processional gospel

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 15:1-47

Sermon March 24th, 2024

Jesus Gives Us Hope

When we are confronted by people who perpetuate injustice. Who oppress vulnerable people. Who live to divide. To cause destruction. Who hurt us again and again. Where do we find our hope? (**Image One:** darkness)

When we face mental illness, terminal illness, chronic pain, a broken heart. Where do we find our hope? (**Image One**)

When we face death. Grief. Loss. Where do we find our hope? (**Image One**)

When we face war, violence, forest fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, mudslides, avalanches, blizzards. Where do we find our hope? (**Image One**)

As we see another church closing its doors. As we see the empty pews around us. As we see our human and financial resources dwindling. As we see the lack of leaders being trained for ministry. As we see the boom of pastors retiring from ministry. As we see the number of vacant churches rise. Where do we find our hope? (**Image One**)

As you walk through this time of transition and vacancy. This time of change. Where do you find your hope? (**Image One**)

Today is Palm/Passion Sunday. Today we listen to the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Today we see the hope Jesus' followers carry with them as they enter Jerusalem with Jesus (**Image Two:** Jesus' entry into Jerusalem). The hope that Jesus has come to restore the Davidic Kingdom. The hope that God's kingdom will reign. The hope that the Empire's time is coming to an end. The hope that their suffering will be no more.

The hope that has been building up in the disciples as they listen to Jesus' teachings. As they witness Jesus' many miracles, healings, acts of love, compassion for the marginalized/vulnerable peoples, grace and humility towards the other, and his ability to challenge the principalities and powers that oppose God's way with his wisdom and authority. (**Image Two**)

As the disciples are confronted by people who perpetuate injustice. As the disciples face pain and suffering. As the disciples support a movement with a future that is uncertain. They find their hope in Jesus and his ministry. (**Image Two**)

Even as Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey to empty streets where only those who have followed him are present. While Pilate the governor of Rome is entering the opposite side of the city on horses and chariots with a large military brigade and massive crowds cheering.

Despite this, the disciples find hope in Jesus that he will restore them from their suffering (**Image Two**). That he will restore the Davidic kingdom.

And though their hope in Jesus will be challenged in their witness of Jesus' arrest, beating, and crucifixion (**Image One**). Even though they scatter. They deny. They stay at a distance. They act out violently. Even though they are left feeling confused at the very prospect that Jesus in some way could still live out his calling as Messiah.

In the witness of the empty tomb. In the witness of the resurrected Christ. They continue to hope in Jesus that he will restore them from their suffering. That he will restore the Davidic Kingdom. That Jesus is the Messiah.

Likewise, through Jesus' teachings, miracles, healings, acts of love and compassion for the marginalized/vulnerable peoples, grace and humility towards the other, his ability to challenge the principalities and powers with his wisdom and authority, and his crucifixion and resurrection story. Through this life-giving ministry that we continue to live out as the body of Christ, we too find hope in Jesus. We too continue to hope that he will restore us from our suffering. That God's kingdom will reign. (**Image Two**)

When we are confronted by people who perpetuate injustice. When we face a mental illness or a terminal illness or chronic pain or a broken heart. When we see another church closing its doors. As we see the empty pews around us. As we see our human and financial resources dwindling. As we see the lack of leaders being trained for ministry. As we see the boom of pastors retiring from ministry. As we see the number of vacant churches rise. As we walk through this time of transition and vacancy.

We continue to find hope in Jesus that he will restore us from our suffering (**Image Two**). Breathing new life into those who are hurt from injustice. Breathing new life into those who suffer from mental or physical illness. Breathing new life into the broken hearted. Breathing new life into the church, and its leadership. Breathing new life into us, All Saints Lutheran church.

Let us pray, God of hope, when we face injustice, illness, broken relationships, the many challenges that come with being the church in the 21st century, this transition and upcoming vacancy, turn our hearts to hope in your Son that we will be restored through him. **Amen.**