

Done At Once
Matthew 21:1-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today is Palm Sunday. Today is also the Sunday of the Passion. It is Sunday of the Passion, for this is the week in which remember and recount the Passion of our Lord – the arrest, trial, suffering, and death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That is swiftly followed next Sunday with the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection.

We have heard the account of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the children passed out the palms, we sang "All glory, laud, and honor to You, Redeemer, King, to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring." Some have already woven their palm into a cross, or are doing so as they listen to the sermon.

But it is amazing how many Christians will make the leap to next Sunday without spending much time to truly pause and reflect on our Lord's Passion.

I find that sort of interesting. Consider this: it is bad news which seems to dominate what is reported and talked about the most. How many people have predicted that with the Tomahawk missile attack upon Syria, World War 3 is about to start? Turn on the news and there is a new terrorist attack in some part of the world. There was another shooting in Chicago. And it is not all far away. Someone's home was broken into in Clintonville. Turn on the TV or radio and there is little good news out there.

Dear friends, I have good news for you. Christ's Passion is you! You are the joy set before Him! You are the reason for which He took on human flesh, the desire and passion for which He endured the cross, scorning its shame.

In our Gospel lesson, Jesus sends two of His disciples to the village before them to bring back a donkey and her colt. They are to bring them back to him. If question about what they are doing, they are to reply, "The Lord needs them." At this response, the owner will send them at once.

Dear friends, how do you respond to the Lord's requests of you? Are they done at once? Or, is there hesitation? Or, are their times they are not even done at all? I guess it all depends on the request, doesn't it?

The Lord says you are to study His Word and meditate upon it day and night? Do you do it at once? Or is your Bible sitting and getting dusty on a book shelf?

The Lord says you are to pray without ceasing? Is it done at once? Is it done daily even, much less without ceasing? Or are folded hands and bowed heads what we pull out only where there is dire need – when we want God to fix the problem we come to Him as the last hope, but we often forget to talk to Him the rest of the time?

The Lord makes requests of you in all your life. In fact, they are more than requests, they are commands. We do not do them "at once," immediately. In fact, too often we do not do them at all.

For shame!

Repent!

Thankfully, that is something you have "done at once," you do it immediately when requested by the Lord. You do confess your sins to God your Father.

Indeed, it was Christ's Passion, His joy, His greatest desire to do for you what you fail to do. He was obedient

to the Father's will in all things.

Son, go take on human flesh in the womb of Mary. When the fullness of time came, He did so at once.

Son, resist all temptation in that human flesh. He did so at once – in the wilderness for 40 days, when people treated Him poorly, in the Garden of Gethsemane when Satan tempted to turn away from the cross.

Son, as God in human flesh, your perfect life needs to be sacrificed unto death for the sins of all people. It was done at once! As a Lamb He was led to the slaughter, sentenced by Pilate to be cursed – for cursed is everyone who is nailed to a tree.

He did these at once, for His Passion was to redeem you, a lost and condemned person. His joy was to purchase you back from sin, death, and the power of the devil. But the cost was horrific, there was no price of money – no gold or silver – that could be paid to cover the debt for you, me, and all mankind. Only the holy precious blood, and the innocent suffering and death of the God-man could pay the price.

So, for the joy set before Him, Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. He is the power and authority of God to make you His own.

And there is our joy, to repent and come to Jesus in faith. While repentance is turning from sin, and turning to Christ for forgiveness, it is turning from sin. In repentance, we desire to sin no longer. We do not just speak a word of repentance, hear a word of forgiveness, and then go back to doing the same old things (or not doing the things we ought to be doing) all over again. We beg that Jesus would forgive us and dwell within us, that we might no longer sin.

And dear friends, it is done at once – immediately. We come before God, begging His mercy in Christ Jesus.

Forgive us our trespasses – and it is done at once.

Be gracious to me, a poor, sinful being – and it is done at once – your sins are forgiven.

Feed and nourish my faith, that I might be for faithful and obedient to you – and it is done at once – Take eat; this is my body. Drink of it, all of you, this is my blood of the new testament, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith – He who began a good work in you and will bring it to completion – it is He who works in you today. It is done at once when we gather together in His name and hear His Word.

Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest! Amen.