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St. Luke's Episcopal Church – Anchorage, Kentucky
Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday – March 19 & 20, 2016
Luke 22:14-23 & Luke 23:1-49

Luke's lengthy Passion narrative takes us on a journey that evokes so many emotions, does it not? As we began our journey outside with the liturgy of the palms, I envisioned the scene outside of Jerusalem, as the large crowd of people welcomed Jesus as he made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, waving their palms and laying their cloaks and palms on the ground to provide a path for Jesus. Many of the people were filled with hope and joy as they shouted "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!!" Yet... there were also some who were present who were skeptical and resistant about Jesus' arrival to Jerusalem.

This underlying theme of hope versus doubt is woven throughout the scriptural accounts of Luke's narrative. Isn't this human nature, though? Haven't most of us experienced some doubt even when things are going relatively well for us? Have you ever heard someone say "Things have been going so well, I'm just waiting for the other shoe to drop."? It's almost as if we don't feel that we deserve to have things go smoothly for us...well at least not for too long. We tend to carry around burdens (however large or small) that we become so accustomed to, we don't even realize how they have become integrated in our lives.

In the past weeks we have addressed repentance and grace. And it is through repentance and grace that we are empowered to let go of our burdens in order that we may live fully in Christ. We are forgiven, and it is the Passion of Christ Jesus that reminds us that we have been set free from sin and death. Jesus illustrates this as he partakes in the Last Supper with His disciples on the night before His death, calling them to be a community of remembrance. "He calls them to remember." This is key element, as in the words of the Rev. Dr. Gary W. Charles "In Luke's gospel, at the Table of plenty Jesus calls them back on this paschal evening, an

evening when betrayal will happen, cowardice will run, and violence will preen like a peacock, but to remember none of these things. Instead, Jesus calls them to remember that when the hour came, both the just and the unjust were fed from this Table and continue to be fed from this banquet Table of plenty in every hour.” In Luke’s gospel message – Jesus calls us to remember our loving Father who will not remember the dishonorable behavior of his prodigal son, but will remember the authentic grace that results in celebration.

When we celebrate the Holy Eucharist we are called to remember the passion of Jesus and His death on the cross, as we prepare our hearts to come to the Table of Grace. Christ is the host and we are His guests. When the celebrant says “The gifts of God for the people of God” we are invited to share what we offer God, and we are to open our hearts to receive what God offers us through His grace. The Holy Eucharist embodies the nearness of the Lord. Think about this for a moment. The Holy Eucharist embodies the nearness of the Lord. What an amazing and profound gift we have been given. Christ with us.

When we come to the Table of remembrance tonight/today, I encourage us to remember the roots of this holy meal, and remember that it is at this Table of grace that we will find freedom that is more powerful than betrayal, and forgiveness that brings peace and life. Let us come to the Table with hope and joy - relinquishing any burden or doubt. As we prepare to enter Holy Week I encourage each of us to bind ourselves to Christ. I leave you with a passage of remembrance from the prayer, and hymn, St. Patrick’s Breast Plate written in 433 A.D. by St. Patrick.

**Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.
Christ~**

Death does not have the final word.

