



Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

**Prayer Concerns:** Maggie McQuillen, Sharm Sisler, and all facing issues from the corona virus: sickness or social isolation, etc. (Names will be removed from the prayer list after four weeks unless there is a change in the person's condition. Requests need to be made by an immediate family member.)

**The Serenity Prayer** (by Reinhold Niebuhr)

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, And wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time, Enjoying one moment at a time, Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that You will make all things right, If I surrender to Your will; So that I may be reasonably happy in this life, And supremely happy with You forever in the next.  
Amen

**St Paul Staff Emails and Phone Numbers**

Pastor Rodney	blumlwa@gmail.com	(319) 389-6153
Nancy Douglas	njldouglas@hotmail.com	(319) 551-3358
Kaileen Weaver	cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com	(951) 553-5728
Barb Wilson	cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com	(319) 480-6031
Lois Ocenosak	stpaulanamosa@gmail.com	(319) 721-9893

Please call us if we can be of assistance to you. PLEASE leave a message if we cannot answer and we will return your call as soon as possible. We may be separated, BUT we are not alone!

**St. Paul is offering our Campership Program** again this year to Children & Youth within our community. The Campership Program is intended to bring the camp experience to children and youth who would not otherwise have access to Camp EWALU. This is done through the award of **Camperships**, a scholarship to one of the Summer Camp Programs at EWALU. It includes partial tuition of \$100 for a camp program term per summer. EWALU offers programs starting with those completing 1st grade through those completing 12th grade.

- If you register through EWALU by April 20th they offer a \$15 discount
- They also offer a Sibling Discount of \$15 for each additional camper

**Please email CYFM if you have any further questions or would like to inquire about a Campership for your child.**

[cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com](mailto:cyfmstpaulanamosa@gmail.com)

Note from Camp EWALU: Events through April 30th are being postponed or canceled.

Summer camp will go on as planned at this time, with enhanced sanitation and health screenings for check-in. We are waiting and watching this situation unfold while listening to the recommendations from our governing bodies.

We will post to Facebook and our website these changes.

- Step 1. We admitted we were powerless over our addiction—that aspects of our lives had become unmanageable.
- Step 2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- Step 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
- Step 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- Step 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- Step 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- Step 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- Step 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- Step 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- Step 10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
- 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**
- 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

(from the 12-steps of Alcoholics Anonymous)

**The Triumphal Entry and Palm Procession: Luke 19:28b-40 NIV**

*<sup>28</sup> Jesus went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup> As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, <sup>30</sup>"Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup>If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'"*

*<sup>32</sup> Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. <sup>33</sup>As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"*

*<sup>34</sup> They replied, "The Lord needs it."*

*<sup>35</sup> They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup>As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.*

*<sup>37</sup> When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:*

*<sup>38</sup> "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

*"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

*<sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"*

*<sup>40</sup> "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."*

Would you expect to hail your Messiah riding on the colt of a donkey? Strange as it may seem, that is exactly what the Jewish followers of Jesus did because they knew the sign that had been given them by Zechariah the prophet: "Behold, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Picture yourself among a crowd of thousands gathered on the hillside outside the eastern walls of Jerusalem called the Mount of Olives. You're gathering there because the feast of Passover is quickly approaching and over a million people will stream to the city this week to offer sacrifice at the

Temple and gather for worship. Suddenly, someone in the crowd shouts out, "He's coming; the Messiah is coming!" People begin to sing Psalms of praise "Blessed is he (the king) who comes in the name of the Lord (118:26)!!!!" The shouting becomes a din as the excitement grows. People place their cloaks (their most prized possessions) on the ground in reverence for the king. {Ironically, Luke doesn't mention palm branches because they were a highly charged political symbol of nationalism, and Jesus' mission was not Israel's sovereignty but the establishment of God's Kingdom. Luke was avoiding conflict with the Roman Empire because his community was trying to live peacefully in it.} Bodies are pressed together as they strain to see; singing and shouting leads to dancing and praising God. In fact, the rejoicing is so great because the entire cosmos has joined in; the world is being created anew as the reign of the Messiah is ushered in; even the stones are ready to cry out with joy, and there are a lot of stones on the Mt. of Olives.

Our procession with palms today is a commemoration of the event in which the Kingdom of the Messiah was proclaimed. But it is not just an event of the past. Our procession again proclaims the Kingdom of the Messiah. It is here, now.

How do you respond to the presence of your awaited Messiah?

The Jewish leaders tell Jesus to quiet (rebuke) his disciples because they were afraid the Romans would see this as a situation ripe for riot. If that were the case, the Roman military would be sent in to quell the crowd, and that always meant bloodshed.

**Reading I: The Book of the Prophet Isaiah 50:4-7 NIV**

<sup>4</sup>The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.

<sup>5</sup>The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious, I have not turned away.

<sup>6</sup>I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

<sup>7</sup>Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.

<sup>8</sup>He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me?

Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me!

<sup>9</sup>It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up.

In this third “servant song,” it is not clear whether Isaiah is referring to himself and the woeful life of a prophet, or the nation of Israel and its challenging mission to the sinful (non-believing) world. In either case, it is clear that Isaiah sees the true disciple/prophet as anyone who perseveres in the face of adversity without concern for self-preservation. God works in the earthiness of his (our) existence. Unlike people today who often seek to relegate God to a Sunday obligation or a churchy place, this Hebrew prophet reminds us that God works in the daily routines of our lives, in our workplaces and athletic competitions, in our T.V. watching and conversation, in our suffering and joy. The interaction between this prophet, or the nation of Israel, and God is one of **body-and-Spirit together in the world**. It is easy to see how this reading is often used as a predictor for Jesus’ mission on earth. He did not stop teaching the people about the Kingdom of God when he was threatened because he believed that any humility he endured would lead to honor from the Father through resurrection (new life).

**Reading II: St. Paul’s letter to the Christians in Philippi, Greece 2:5-11 NIV**

<sup>5</sup>In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup>Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup>rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup>And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

How do you encourage people facing hardship and suffering because of their faith? Paul chose this hymn to offer hope to this early Christian community in northern Greece by recalling that the Messiah whom they follow also suffered, and his suffering was a result of his **humility**.

This particular passage includes several significant

*Christological* ideas (words or beliefs about who Jesus the Christ was). First of all, Paul implies that Jesus was with God from the beginning. The Greek word Paul used to refer to Jesus, translated here “Lord,” was the translation of the Hebrew word for God. Paul was equating the two by citing the title placed on Jesus by God Himself, “a name which is above every name: Lord.”

Second, Paul points out that Jesus was not simply God putting on an act and pretending to be human. There is no salvation in that. Rather, Jesus was God fully emptied (*kenosis*), and instead of grasping at equality with God (the sin of Adam and Eve), Jesus entered fully into the human experience so he could show us the way to the Father and how to live in the Kingdom of Heaven today. His suffering teaches us about our own lives and the nature of suffering; his hope in God throughout his passion is the same hope available to us in our faith relationship. Jesus chose to enter into suffering at the hands of wicked people not out of some blind sense of duty, to fulfill a debt to the Creator, nor due to despair and sorrow. Jesus suffered so that God’s glory could be revealed in the new life of the resurrection. Viewed from this perspective, suffering has the possibility of being endured for the glory of God and to come to know ultimate love.

On a practical level, we can also realize that Paul was challenging the prevailing thoughts found in this Roman port city. Many of the folks were retired Roman military personnel who would willingly participate in the cult of Caesar. In this passage, we hear Paul deliberately using images from the cult to Caesar (bend the knee, mention of the empire, the title Lord) and applying them to Jesus. The choice was not a simple one because those who chose to follow Jesus as Lord were committing an act of treason against the Roman Empire, a crime punishable by death.

**Gospel: Luke 22:14 – 23:56**

Although today’s account ends prior to the resurrection event, we hear the story as a whole, recognizing that the passion led to Jesus’ ultimate victory over death in the resurrection. It is good news filled with the pain and sin inherent in human dynamics.

As you hear the Passion narrative, you might pick up some prominent themes that have been presented in the gospel readings from Luke these past few months. Among these are: the Jewish expectations for a Messiah are turned upside down—-the wealthy and powerful of the world (hear Pharisees, Sadducees, Chief Priests, and prominent Roman leaders) are brought low while the poor and outcasts are honored; the Last Supper becomes an opportunity for Jesus to teach about what it means to be his follower; Jesus displays compassion and the wideness of God’s mercy even as he is being destroyed when he comforts the mourning women and later from the cross asks

forgiveness for his persecutors.

Why did Jesus' followers struggle so intensely with following him to the end? Why did they struggle to believe? We need to recall how offensive a crucifixion was to the Jewish idea of a powerful, triumphant Messiah. The cross was an instrument of torture, a symbol of shame and humiliation. Even more, it was a sign of being cursed by God. For the Jews awaiting a Messiah who would overthrow the occupying Roman forces (i.e. the hope of Judas Iscariot and the Zealots), or a Messiah who would demonstrate God's power and victory and righteousness, or a Messiah who would bring about peace and justice, the crucifixion represented disastrous failure. For the Jewish people of Jesus' day (which included the Apostles and disciples) the idea of a suffering servant for a messiah was a contradiction in terms. It didn't fit their imaginations nor religious categories. For Luke's community, it may have been the ultimate overcoming of the Roman violence and oppression.

### **Some additional information:**

- The Passover feast celebrated annually by the Jews on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan, commemorated their flight from Egypt and the passing over of the angel of death. It is a proclamation of hope and new life and at the center of their faith.
- The "hour" refers to the beginning of the Passover meal, but metaphorically refers to times when God's glory is revealed in Jesus' passing over, most specifically in his death.
- The discussion of bags and swords is also metaphorical. Jesus is not advocating violence, rather he is calling them to spiritual preparedness for the conflict into which they are about to enter. Jesus uses references to material realities when speaking about spiritual realities; unfortunately, the disciples often do not make the connection, as in this case when a servant's ear is severed.
- Peter, James and John are not separated from the rest of the disciples when they go to the Mount of Olives to pray but act as symbols of the whole group, in fact, the entire church, who need the strength given through prayer.
- Herod is not the same Herod the Great of Jesus' infancy narrative. This is one of his sons, Herod Antipas, who also had John the Baptist executed. He does not condemn Jesus and together with Pilate becomes a witness to Jesus' innocence.
- Jesus tells the women to weep for Jerusalem and her suffering children. This would have been particularly poignant to the early hearers of this gospel because it was written shortly after Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E. Some concluded this was divine retribution for killing the Messiah, Jesus.
- The repentant criminal and unnamed centurion represent all of us. They are outcasts confessing belief

in Jesus as the innocent universal Savior.

- Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (council of religious leaders) who accepted Jesus' message. He risked his reputation and status to offer a tomb, allowing Jesus to be buried before the beginning of the Sabbath, which kept him from rotting on the cross. The Romans liked to make a morbid spectacle of those who had been crucified as a deterrent to uprisings.

### **Taking it home**

- Did you find yourself surprised that the apostles argued among themselves so much at the Last Supper?
- What does their arguing tell you about the followers of Jesus, even this close to his death? How are they like you and your family? How are they like our parish family when we gather?
- Suffering is a part of the human condition. Search out a story of someone whose trust in God helped her or him to face suffering well and find new life.
- Recall three things that have happened to you this Lent worth being jubilant about. Wave your palm a little higher!
- Watch the papers or news this week for examples of people who are living the way Isaiah describes.
- Simplify your life on Good Friday and Holy Saturday so you can reflect on a life without the grace of Christ in it. What would you lack? What parts of life would be harder?

**Face Masks may be available** at the office, call before coming to check, sewers are busy trying to keep up. Need delivery of mask call Ed & Susan. In town Anamosa only please.

**Jones County Food Bank:** To donate money, checks should be written to Jones County Community Food Bank and mailed to 105 Broadway Place, Anamosa IA 52205. Checks written to HACAP cannot be donated to the food bank! Julie Finn at HACAP is the only one working at this time. To visit the pantry or drop off food, you call 462-4343 to make an appointment.

Wayne Zion has a page with Jones County Food Banks. <https://waynezion.org/>

The Apostolic Assembly Church, Anamosa operates a food bank out of their church. THEY WILL HAND OUT FOOD TO ANYONE AT THE FOLLOWING TIMES AT THEIR CHURCH PARKING LOT. NO QUESTIONS ASKED

Every 2nd and 4th Saturday 10AM--12PM (as long as needed) Drive in, tell them how many in your household and they will give allotted amount and put it in your vehicle.

**Forks and Friends** will be adding a "packaged/pickup meal" date in April. They will be preparing take-out meals with prepackaged items. Pick up dates at UMC:

- \*Thursday, April 9 from 5 PM to 6 PM
- \*Thursday, April 23 from 5 PM to 6 PM