

BROADWAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH • COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

THE WORSHIP OF GOD • APRIL 14, 2019

Litany

Based on Psalm 118

O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good.

Steadfast love endures forever!

Out of my distress I called on the Lord, and the Lord answered me
and set me on solid ground.

Steadfast love endures forever!

With the Lord on my side I do not fear.

Steadfast love endures forever!

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

Steadfast love endures forever!

This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

Steadfast love endures forever!

Let us pray:

Open to us the gates of righteousness that we may enter through them.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

We thank you that you have answered us and become our salvation.

Hosanna and Hallelujah!

The Scripture

Luke 19:28-40

After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. *When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."*

The Message
Parade Enough
Terry Overfelt

THE LITTLE PARADE

For many years, Columbia Public Schools would celebrate the fall homecoming weekend with a parade. Each of the high schools and junior highs would march their bands, clubs, teams, and class floats. Add to that a convoy of convertibles for the homecoming queen candidates and their escorts. School would be dismissed before lunch that Friday, and I would scurry to gather our kids for what they came to call, “The Cute Little Parade.” The parade entrants were generous with tossing sweetness. We’d leave with bags filled with pavement-broken suckers and Tootsie Rolls enough to be the emergency overflow in case we ran out on Halloween. The longer the parade, the more your face hurts from smiling. Parades are happy!

WAVING

I loved the waving. [Editor’s note: Terry whimsically demonstrated five different ways to wave.] Lightbulb, windshield wiper, window washer, and for the queens: Long, long, 3 short -pearls. My personal favorite is the flap.

Well, in today’s Scripture, Jesus is coming into Jerusalem in a cute little homecoming parade. Who knows; this waving of palm branches may have been the inauguration of the parade wave!

JESUS PARADE

Today’s Scripture is a spontaneous parade. It got started when Jesus, a few chapters back, set his face toward Jerusalem and his announced betrayal into human hands. He started moving that way through villages, along roads, and to listening ears with parables and teaching. He moved through those in need of healing, welcoming the widowed, the orphaned, the alien strangers, the poor, the children, the wealthy, the thieves, the blind, the possessed and the dispossessed.

The crowds were cheering at best and curious at the least about all powerful sweetness he was handing out. Some tried to warn him to turn back, because Herod wanted to kill him. But Jesus said for them, “To tell that fox that I am on my way.”

He was entering in the cultural center, the capital city of Jerusalem with a motley entourage of followers, many who had been living on the margins.

The big parade across town – well, that’s more like MU Homecoming. These entries will have the Romans lining up; huge balloon floats of big, Roman soldiers; mighty horses, and the like. It will have all the political dignitaries.

This parade is on the occasion of Passover's Liberation. It is ironic because the imperials are not Jewish. They are capitalizing on all the visitors from surrounding areas coming to town, like those of us who do not have Mexican heritage but still whack a pinata on Cinco De Mayo. Everybody wants in on the fun.

Parades, like this one with Jesus, seem spontaneous and impromptu. They happen like a conga line in a wedding reception; the chain just continues to build. It's festive and it's catching and it's exciting.

Hosanna! Hosanna is an exclamation that, at once, says "the please and thank you prayer." It means praise, "**Praise** God, the King, the son of David, Messiah," and also, a petition, "**Save us** from this oppressive state, from ourselves! **Hosanna, Praise! Save us!**"

You are the God who saves us, worthy of all our praises!

The crowd is joyful and loud! The Pharisees ask Jesus to quiet his followers. He might be drawing attention away from the political parade. That would not bode well for several reasons. You must love Jesus' answer, "Ok, but if I do, even the very rocks will cry out."

Even the rocks know Jesus. All of creation knows that the peaceable kingdom has come. Jesus is entering the City of David, Jerusalem and even the rocks know it. Jesus has not so subtly declared himself the Lord and liberator of the Jews – not with his words – even when he will soon be interrogated as to his kingship, his answer is non- declamatory, "You say that I am."

But in his choice of entry, *he is saying it.*

Six-centuries earlier, as the Babylonian captivity was ending, the prophet Zechariah was declaring a future liberation and the reign of peace that would come to the Hebrew nation. Zechariah was trying to lift up a defeated and discouraged people with the hopes that their rule of peace was coming. Bringing it would be a liberator who would have the last and permanent word...Peace.

Listen to what Zechariah said would happen, while we remember this was 20-generations before Jesus was born!

(From the Book of Zechariah, a summation)

The liberation will come with a man named Branch, coming down not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of Hosts. One to give true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, to the widow, the orphan, the alien, the poor and devising no evil in hearts against one another. Your

KING comes to you triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. There will no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day. He comes commanding peace to the nations in dominion from the river to the ends of the earth. One whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him and weep bitterly. His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Lord will become king over all the earth.

Jesus knew this ancient prophecy. He makes himself grand marshal of this cute little parade. He orders two of his disciples to get a colt that is tied up. He can't predict how the owner will react, but he tells them to say that, "The master needs it."

Apparently, that was enough, and this is **parade enough** as Jesus rides in. The colt choice is one signaling peace.

Warrior kings rode in on horses. Surrendering, peaceable kings rode on humble donkeys. The people are adoring him, loving the parade, gladly shouting, and waving in the reign of mighty love.

WHY THIS DAY?

Jesus said that he wanted to eat the Passover feast with his friends one last time. I have known more than one occasion where a loved one who was close to dying tried to and sometimes did hold on for one last Christmas, or birthday, or any number of celebrations that seemed to motivate their staying of death.

Jesus knew that his entry into the reach of the Roman officials and even among the temple order that were disgruntled and threatened by his power and truth would be out for him. He said so. He paraded in anyway, just in time for a Maundy or Mandate, commandment Thursday.

We all know what the commandment was to be, LOVE. Jesus exemplified it with the washing of feet, a most humble and loving act of service. Jesus wanted to do this for his disciples, and break bread, and share the cup. This is what Jesus was holding on for. One last time. (Matthew 26:17)

So, back to the parade. It draws attention to the one, who is in the procession; and it draws in the ones, who line the street, wave the palm branches, and lay their coats down to create the honorary (red) carpet of homage.

"Hosanna! Praise and Save Us!"

This is the last joyful parade opportunity. Next Jesus will be turning over tables in the temple, which is quite telling of the pressure he feels to set things right in the few opportunities he has left. Then it is supper, then betrayal, remembering, and arrest.

Then the world is the authority on Jesus' body and fate. Or so it thinks. Jesus walks humbly and peaceably into its courts, too.

I'm so glad Jesus had the parade. It makes me think of all the reasons we must celebrate: "PRAISE AND SAVE US HOSANNA," – even when we don't know or fear how things are going to turn out. A parade says: Don't worry about tomorrow.

"Carpe diem." "Seize the day," says the Roman poet the liberations of old and now hopefully from the oppressive reign of Rome, in this moment, are cause to celebrate, so, we wave.

We know that come Friday there will be another processional parade through the passion and pain of Christ's carrying the cross. We won't be waving.

But for today, Jesus people, Jesus is bringing and facing the music. Let's line up for the parade. Who has time and reason for parades?

In his book, *Everybody, Always*, Bob Goff describes the annual, neighborhood parade that began to love and know the neighbors on their street. He says neighbors are not projects. They are teachers, and we give thanks for the privilege of doing life with them.

He points to Jesus' "Love your neighbor" commandment saying, "You can't love people you don't know."

They've been parading for 22 years. They loved their street so much that when the bigger house across from them came up for sale, they moved into it. Then they had the unique opportunity to sell their first home and choose their neighbor.

Carol was a widow, who became like family to them – cookies, and time for lots of favorite stories told over and again. When she got ill, she told Bob that the thing she was going to miss most was the little parade. She held on. When New Year's Day came, the parade which had grown over the 22 years to include hundreds of neighbors and their friends, came down the street. Bob had positioned Carol to watch out her front window. The parade route shifted when it got to her house and landed in her yard. While each neighbor came into view, pressing their faces against her window, waving to Carol, she lifted her hand to blow kisses. She had a second parade later that week, into her next neighborhood.

Today, for all of us, I want us to think about the opportunities we must be and see little spontaneous parades that shout praise and salvation, **Hosanna!** Parades to celebrate coming home; the place toward which your heart turns your face. Parade – free of anything that binds you up – past, present, or future; and move into the joyful moment.

The cute little Parade is enough. Start walking and wave.

Amen! Amen!

Benediction

If a parade moves through a street and no one is around to see it, did it really happen?
It's happening!

May the winds welcome you with softness.
May the sun bless you with its warm hands.
May you fly so high and so well,
that God joins you in your laughter,
and sets you gently back
into the loving arms of Mother Earth. Amen.