

## Readings for Sunday, April 5, 2020 Palm Sunday



### AS WE GATHER

Palm Sunday begins with unbridled joy as we recall how Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, while being acclaimed by the crowds with loud shouts of “Hosanna” and boisterous waving of palm branches.

So today we begin with songs of praise and waving of palm branches as we hail Jesus as the One worthy of all glory, laud, and honor. But then the solemnness of Holy Week also begins. With a time of silence, the service shifts our focus to Jesus’ path to the cross. As foretold by prophets long ago, Jesus was stricken and afflicted, beaten and spit upon, crucified, and He died. He did this out of divine love for all of humanity, taking on Himself the sins of all people for our forgiveness. Today’s worship reflects the pattern of our lives. At times we experience unbridled joy and celebration. And then, sometimes in the next moment, we experience heartbreaking suffering. Jesus is there with us—in the joyful celebrations, in the heartbreak and suffering. He alone can transform it all into deeper love for God and neighbor. The hour of Jesus’ death on the cross is the hour of our life and salvation.

### Old Testament, Isaiah 50:4-9a (ESV)

(Jesus says that the hour is near for the Son of Man to be glorified.)

The Lord GOD has given me  
the tongue of those who are taught,  
that I may know how to sustain with a word  
him who is weary.

Morning by morning he awakens;  
he awakens my ear  
to hear as those who are taught.

<sup>5</sup> The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious;  
I turned not backward.

<sup>6</sup> I gave my back to those who strike,  
and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard;  
I hid not my face  
from disgrace and spitting.

<sup>7</sup> But the Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like a flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

<sup>8</sup> He who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who is my adversary?  
Let him come near to me.  
<sup>9</sup> Behold, the Lord GOD helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

### **Epistle, Philippians 2:5-11 (ESV)**

(Every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.)

<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so 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 confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### **Gospel, John 12:20-43 (ESV)**

(Jesus says that the hour is near for the Son of Man to be glorified.)

#### **Some Greeks Seek Jesus**

<sup>20</sup> Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup> So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup> Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup> And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup> Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

#### **The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up**

<sup>27</sup> “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose, I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup> The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup> He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. <sup>34</sup> So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?”

<sup>35</sup> So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

### **The Unbelief of the People**

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. <sup>37</sup> Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, <sup>38</sup> so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,  
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

<sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

<sup>40</sup> “He has blinded their eyes  
and hardened their heart,  
lest they see with their eyes,  
and understand with their heart, and turn,  
and I would heal them.”

<sup>41</sup> Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. <sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.