

Sermon Starter – Meeting God in Celebration and Suffering

Isaiah 50:4-9, Matthew 21:1-11

1. If your goal is to cover both Palm Sunday and at least part of the Passion Week account, a sermon about encountering God's presence in the celebrations and sufferings of life would be one angle. Where have you or the congregation experienced God, and how have you experienced "God with us" in life's high and low moments?
2. A Palm Sunday focus could point out that Jesus enters the city on a donkey (symbol of peace), while the crowd appears to be calling for Jesus to initiate an ousting of the Romans (Hosanna = Save us now!). What is startling is that Jesus seems to accept their worship, be it totally sincere or unintentionally misguided. This could be a Sunday to think about worship. Why do we do what we do? What motivates our worship? Are there "results" we expect? The good news is: God accepts our worship as we grow in our worship "practice."
3. A sermon on Isaiah 50 could highlight the humanity of the text. Note all the references to the human body. The good news comes in the multiple God-verbs: God has given, God wakens, God has opened, God helps (twice), God vindicates. God clearly encounters us first so that we are capable of encountering any and all of life.

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