

Sermon Starter – Jesus the Humble Servant

Isaiah 50:4-9; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27, 66; Matthew 21:1-11

It can be difficult to know what is needed in a Palm Sunday sermon. Certainly the Scripture passages cover much territory. As the preacher, you will need to discern what kind of emphasis is needed. If your congregation dwells in the Passion Week story with a Maundy Thursday or Good Friday service, you may want to focus on the triumphal entry account in Matthew 21, exploring Jesus' way of turning upside down the expectations of a king entering the holy city. Or you may discern that the congregation needs to be led into the Good Friday story in order to prepare them for celebrating the risen Christ on Easter.

The servant's song from Philippians 2 speaks to both approaches. Both the triumphal entry and the crucifixion accounts provoke us to see Jesus as the humble servant who does not "consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage" (Philippians 2:6 NIV). He chooses to be obedient to death, and God exalts him to the highest place. In his ministry, Jesus has offered life and liberation to all. His death is an attempt to silence his work and his followers. (Soon, we will celebrate that his crucifixion was unable to destroy Jesus or his message. The powers of destruction cannot destroy the power of God's love and purposes.)

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