

Isaiah 50: 4-9

Psalms 31: 9-16

Philippians 2: 5-11

Luke 22: 14-23: 56

Lord may the words that I speak be the words that you would want spoke. Amen

What a celebration!!! Think of how it must have been during the time of Jesus; people all gathering to usher in their king of the Jews, the dust that must have come from all those people moving around, and then the small streets and alley ways they would have traveled. The joy of the Passover when God, getting the people out of Egypt, had the people put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and the lintel of the house where they were eating the roasted lamb. Pharaoh was finally convinced to let the people go. The Jews gather in Jerusalem at the Passover as Jesus comes in on a donkey to celebrate the time they were able to put the lambs' blood on the door and the lintel so that the sting of death to their first born would never occur again. In the midst of all this celebration, Jesus takes his disciples to an upper room to explain to them that there was going to be a new covenant between God and the people, and the death of Jesus would be required to atone for the sins of the people once and for all. A new Messiah had come to the earth, and the people needed to learn the importance of this action.

The joy of the moment changes so quickly from people laying palm branches and coats along the way for the new Messiah to arrive in the city. The people had their hearts and minds set on a king who would rule the world, but they were not at all convinced that they wanted a king to rule their hearts and lives or to remain silent in the face of the Roman leaders of that time. They expected something that they wanted, instead of taking the time to ask what was wanted by God in their lives.

So joy turns into anger. Crucify him, crucify him, let us not worry about tomorrow, but let's think about what we WANT instead of God's rule. Even Peter, the one who told Jesus he would never deny him, does so three times before the rooster crows. How easily weakness overcomes those plans that are not fully in God's hands. Have you ever looked back and seen how the night before you said; tomorrow I am going to begin this, or start doing this better, and then the next day you find how difficult that seems, and yet

only eight hours ago, it seemed so easy. You know what made this so much more difficult the next day; because you did not take the time the night before to ask God what would be best and to give you the strength to do what is right.

It is no different right here at Holy Comforter, where we want so much to carry out God's plan, but are we really taking the time to pray to God for strength in our own lives to do the right thing? Are we willing to ask others to join us here and become involved in this wonderful ministry?

Let me tell you a story of how God operates in our lives. I pulled into the gas station the other morning and was not feeling really great, but not bad, and I began to pump my gas. After finishing, the machine asked if I wanted a receipt. I pushed yes and waited for the piece of paper. Well, would you know it but it was out of paper and told me to walk into the station to get a receipt. Well that just pushed my button and I was furious. I began to walk to the station, which looked as if it was 3 miles away and thinking how I am going to let someone know that this is no way to run a station and they need to check these things. I looked at the cashier and asked for a receipt on number 11 and she said, "What church do you work in?" I began to tell her about our church and where it was and to come join us as I changed the look on my face from anger to delight. She said she would like to join us. As I left the station, I had to laugh as I realized that God had taken hold of the situation, and I needed to pay attention to how to be nice; it was not her fault.

So are we willing to allow the Holy Spirit to fill us and to enter into Holy Week opening our lives to God so that when Easter arrives next Sunday, that we come from sadness into joy of knowing God is completely in our lives? If you are going to really understand and enjoy the impact of the resurrection, you will need to make yourself fully available for next week, Holy Week. I plan to see most of you this week at the services. You know the rest of the story, but have you allowed your heart to fully embrace the story?

Let us pray

God give us the courage and the strength to fully engage our lives with this Holy Week. Help us to do what you ask of us, and may our hearts reflect the joy of the Easter Season. Amen