

# Holy, Wholly - Palm Sunday

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Preacher: Pastor Cathy Hall Stengel

[ 0 : 00 ] Practice covering care This is conocichtet definition Episode 3 Summoningançando  
Thank you.

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[ 2 : 57 ] Thank you.

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[ 5 : 27 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

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[ 8 : 27 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

asking to doing is a lifelong and hard asking it's a hard thing for us to do and so we pray together forgiving God we have opened ourselves to healing and sometimes it is easier to pray nice prayers than to do the hard work of living into what you show us help us to remember the very sacred nature of ourselves broken and rough-edged as we are help us to acknowledge the thin or fragile parts of ourselves susceptible to breaking and yet able to be transformed help us to see ourselves as you see us help us to believe in our own ability to change and heal as you believe in us amen know this you we are never alone in the struggle no matter what Jesus will always be on the journey with us life does not pass us by we are part of this body of Christ whether we are online or here in person a community always seeking healing for you for me for all for those for the least the lost and the little ones and so it is that we all are forgiven all men oh oh oh oh two things that I would like to say as we prepare for this time of offering one is that um with our Thursday night dinners at Niagara Falls that have been a huge success one of the things that probably for us in here kind of got lost in all this preparation is that we need hams and so if you're inclined to buy a ham for the dinner on

Thursday evening you can bring it by the church this week while the church is open or make arrangements to bring it hopefully by Wednesday morning at the latest because they have to be purchased if we don't have them by Wednesday morning so earlier is better where are they on sale all these probably other places as well doesn't matter what size it is just bring ham anything else I would like to say that this day is the beginning of a week where we acknowledge that Jesus gave everything everything and he as he walks towards the cross is most important message to us is give your hearts give yourself give your talents your offerings give your prayers just give what you can which is yourself and I ask that we just honor and celebrate the fact that God gave us this life to share so I invite you to think about that as we prepare and this time for offerings that can be brought and mailed and given online so let us just be in an attitude of gratitude our welcome to the and

I see the King of Glory Calming on the clouds with fire The whole earth shakes, the whole earth shakes I see His love and mercy Washing over all the sea The people sing, the people sing Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna in the highest

[ 15 : 26 ] Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna in the highest I see a generation Rising up to take their place With selfless faith With selfless faith I see a new revival Stirring as we pray and sing We're on our knees We're on our knees Hosanna, Hosanna

Hosanna in the highest Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna in the highest Fill my heart and make it free Open up my eyes The King's on sea Show me how to love my view Have loved me Break my mind, hold and praise yours Everything I am for your kingdom is mine As I walk from my heart and make it free

As I walk from my heart and make it free Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna in the highest Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna is the highest Hosanna in the highest Hosanna is the highest Hosanna in the highest Hosanna in the highest Hosanna here in highest Jesus I love you.

I love you.

I love you. I love you. I love you. Amen. Let's take our seats. Good morning, church.

[ 19 : 32 ] Amen. It's always a joy to be able to come together in this way, to be able to open our hearts and praise God together, and to take this time to be able to connect as one people, one church family as we go to God in prayer.

We know there are always things that we carry, always things on our hearts, those joys that we need to lift up as well as those burdens we need to lay down. So let's come together now and go to our Lord in prayer.

Amen. Gracious and loving God, we come this morning grateful for the gift of this day, grateful for the gift of this season.

We come with our hearts ready to shout as we, too, lift our voices for what it means to see our Lord come in victory, to see our Lord come in peace, to know our Lord's presence in this unique and special way.

Lord, we would also know that you bring us so many things.

[ 20 : 45 ] You bring us the gift of healing, healing for all those broken parts of ourselves, for those parts of our bodies that need that touch, those things that aren't working at their very best.

We think of those who also need healing, those in our lives, those whom we know, whether they have fallen to this particular virus, whether it is another medical challenge.

We know that your power flows generously and easily. And Lord, we are grateful for the ways in which we have known healing and trust you to continue to give that gift. Lord, we pray for those who need that strength that only you can provide, the well of your presence that comes up in them that allows them to provide such tender and gracious care for those who are ailing in any way.

Renew their strength. Let them be inspired by the moment that we celebrate today by your very presence among us. Lord God, we are also mindful of those who need healing in their heart, whether it's due to grief or whether it's due to broken relationship, whether it is just due to the weight of a particular problem on them.

But Lord, let them know that healing. Let them know that you have come to bring joy, to bring peace, to restore that which feels broken.

[ 22 : 19 ] And Lord, for all of the problems that are simply too big for our two hands. Lord, we would ask you to go where only you can, to do what only you can.

Help us to see your truth, your will, and your way. To walk in it, to speak in it, to share it with those who may not understand. Because it is through your presence, through your gifts, through your sacrifice, that this world will ultimately be transformed.

Let your people indeed be your people, the body of Christ in this broken and hurting world. For all its beauty, for all its gifts, for all that it brings and offers.

For all its gifts, for all its gifts, for all your gifts, for all its gifts, ■keln to love you, as you are your gifts, for all your gifts, for all you have done in your gifts. You are what we truly need. You are what we truly long for. There is no question for which the answer is not ultimately Jesus Christ.

And as we come today, help us to lift our voices, to lift our hearts, to lift our very souls in praise.

[ 23 : 32 ] as we too let our lives cry out, blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. For it is in his name we pray.

Amen. Good morning.

Good morning. We're continuing our study in Matthew. This is chapter 9 verses 1 through 8. Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own town.

Some men brought to him a paralyzed man lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven.

At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, This fellow is blaspheming. Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?

[ 25 : 07 ] Which is easier to say? Your sins are forgiven or to say, get up and walk? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

So he said to the paralyzed man, Get up, take your mat, and go home. Then the man got up and went home.

When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe. And they praised God, who had given such authority to man. This is the word of our Lord.

Thanks be to God. I've told you before that I didn't grow up in the church.

So when I did become a Christian, My only knowledge around forgiveness was that you ask God to be forgiven, and God grants you that forgiveness.

[ 26 : 18 ] I didn't know that there were places and parts of our Christian faith that felt as though only the pastor or some designated person could be a part of helping a person be forgiven.

And I might have told you once that when I was doing some hospital work back when I was in seminary, and a woman was telling me her story, and she was ultimately going to die.

And she kept talking about her story, talking about her story, and she knew she was going to be leaving a young son behind. And I was like 23.

I didn't know where she was going or what it was she wanted. And finally, with some God piece of wisdom, I asked her, Is there something I can do for you?

And her response was, Would you offer forgiveness to me for the harm done to my family and to my son who will be left behind?

[ 27 : 29 ] And I did what we do in worship, worship, which is, you know, I proclaim, I know in my heart, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, you are forgiven.

And her whole spirit just lost that anxiety, that sense of holding on to sin that somehow needed to be forgiven.

And it was a revelation to me because I didn't know that there were people who would hold their sins until someone like me, credentialed by the church, offered that forgiveness.

We believe that if we ask God for forgiveness, we are forgiven. Sometimes we want a word of forgiveness.

We want a word from God. Don't we always want a word from God, especially when we feel as though guilt is holding on to us? In this paralyzed man, we have no idea.

[ 28 : 42 ] We don't have any idea who he was. We don't have a sense that he said to the people that were carrying him, take me to Jesus so that I can be forgiven. Because in some ways, the healing seemed like a secondary thing.

You wonder if the teachers of the law hadn't said something about being blaspheming to forgive him. Then came along the healing and the man got up and walked.

But we don't know. We don't hear the man on the mat saying, forgive me, Lord. I came here for you to forgive me. So as we've gone through these weeks of miracles, which I'll go through in a minute, what we realize is that God knows us.

And God knows what we need. So maybe what God knew about this man is that first he had to be forgiven for whatever it was.

We don't know and we don't need to know. And then he could be fully healed, both in grace and in body. And isn't that an amazing miracle?

[ 29 : 59 ] And isn't that a great preparation for us this week? Because we go this week to our own Savior Jesus being broken and being resurrected in body, mind, spirit so that he could offer us forgiveness for no matter what and no matter when.

I want to kind of revisit some of the weeks that we've talked about. But in between some of these, I'm going to share with you some lyrics from a song.

And if you haven't heard it, it's a little big to play in church. So I'm going to share with you some of the lyrics. But it was released in February.

Toby Mac saying the song is Help is on the way. And I think about these miracles and I think about all these situations. And then I think about you and me and us.

And don't we want to know that help is on the way? We started on Ash Wednesday where the scripture reading was come to me all of you who are weary and heavy laden.

[ 31 : 14 ] Come to me and I will give you rest. It may be midnight or midday, never early, never late. He's going to stand by what he claims, lived enough to say, I have heard your heart.

I see your pain out in the dark, out in the rain. Feet so, feel so alone, feel so afraid. I heard you pray in Jesus' name.

Help is on the way. It's rounding the corner. Help is on the way. It's coming for you. Help is on the way. I've lived enough to say, Help is on the way.

And sometimes it's days. And sometimes it's weeks. And sometimes it's years. Some face a lifetime of falling tears. But he is in the darkness.

He is in the darkness. Because help is on the way. And he's in the cold. And just like morning, he always shows. And then the first Sunday in Lent, not only did we talk about the healing of the leper, we talked about him touching the leper, coming close to the leper, and healing.

[ 32 : 33 ] And we think about, who saw this? He told the leper not to say anything until he was officially named as clean and healed by the temple.

But he was. And so he told. And we know people saw it. And they were changed. The second Sunday in Lent, we talked about the healing of the centurion's servant.

The centurion, this important man that we could almost imagine in a uniform. He comes and he kneels before Jesus. Centurions didn't kneel before anybody.

But he comes not because he wants to be healed. He comes because he wants his servant to be healed. The crowd witnessed this, that a centurion of all people would come and kneel before Jesus for a servant to be healed.

The turning upside down of the culture and the system of power in Jesus' time. Help was on the way.

[ 33 : 40 ] The third Sunday in Lent, two blind men were crying out, have mercy on us, son of David. And he went to their house. And by their faith, they were healed of their blindness.

And those men had cried out their faithfulness. And right around the corner, help was on the way. In Lent, the fourth Sunday in Lent, we talked about the woman who touched his robe, was healed instantly by her faith, and a leader in the synagogue came to get Jesus to heal his dying, actually dead, daughter.

Jesus resurrected her, and the woman was healed. And the woman was healed immediately. Help was on the way. I've said, I've seen my share of troubles, but the Lord ain't failed me yet.

We'll keep holding on to the promise, y'all, that he's rolling up his sleeves again. The next week, Jesus challenged all of those who felt called to follow, teaching them the reality of discipleship, and he, with them, saw that they weren't really ready.

And then, he challenged the faith of disciples, of the disciples who were saying, Lord, save us, we're dying in a boat, we're going to drown.

[ 35 : 14 ] Those were Jesus' closest companions. Closest companions. And he challenged their faith. And he heard their heart.

He saw their pain. Out of the dark, out of the rain, they felt so alone, they felt so afraid. I heard them pray in Jesus' name, and he came.

And here we are on Palm Sunday. And people were crying out in praise for Jesus, and we have the healing of the paralytic.

And Jesus challenged the teachers of the law. This is what Jesus came for, to teach the teachers that the system that they knew, which is based on power and importance and position, had no place in the kingdom of God.

That the least and the lost and the little ones and the powerful ones all had access. to the hope and the healing of Christ.

[ 36 : 28 ] He challenged their belief that forgiveness from Jesus wasn't real, wasn't allowed. They might not have liked it, but the needs of the paralytic forgiveness and healing happened.

It may be midnight or midday. It's never early. It's never late. He's going to stand by what he claims. I've lived enough to say that help is on the way.

Help is on the way. It's rounding the corner. Help is on the way. So, in every one of these stories we know that there were witnesses.

And now we come to this Palm Sunday and we imagine all the people who crowded to Jerusalem. And I want to invite you to go on a trip with me.

Two years ago I was in Jerusalem. We were traveling around Israel and part of this journey was walking the road of Palm Sunday.

[ 37 : 38 ] And so we started just like Jesus on Mount Olivet across up high and you could see the city of Jerusalem and the shiny dome is the dome of the rock which is a mosque in Jerusalem that you can see from so far around.

And we walked this road down and we got closer and closer and then we began walking down the streets and there we are. And there were a lot of us and we were walking and talking and we were talking about what it must have been like to have these narrow streets.

A lot of these streets have not changed in all of these years. And you'll see even further but we talked about Palm Sunday. We talked about the feelings, the people, the palms, the throwing down of cloaks and on we went down to the city.

And now we come to Herod's gate which is the ancient city of Jerusalem has a gate on every side. You cannot just walk in some broad opening.

It's not the geographical city of Jerusalem. It's the ancient city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem. And this is Herod's gate. You may think about what that means that it's called Herod's gate.

[ 39 : 04 ] We paused outside this gate. We talked about the people, the shouting, the carrying on on this what we think of as Palm Sunday.

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest. This is the Lord and He's coming. Let us praise Him. Who was it who was there?

Who was it who was there? And I think about all the things that people have said and we went closer.

We went through the gate and we began to walk through these narrow city walls. And I don't know about you but I have heard preachers and teachers talk about the people that gathered, the people that waved, the people that had palms, the people that had put their coats down for Jesus and the donkey to walk on and they've called them traitors because of waving one day and yelling crucify another day in the same week.

I've always struggled with that. I've always wondered how could the people who'd experienced all these healings who might have come, whose families might have come to Jerusalem, how could they who had witnessed the power of Jesus right in front of them, maybe they were alive or walking or healed because of Jesus, how would they wave palms and then shout crucify?

[ 40 : 50 ] And here's what I decided as we walked this road. As I stood on this pathway and imagined the group going up the steps, I found myself as the group went on, I kind of went over and leaned up against the cold wall.

The temperature changed from outside the city to drastically cooler inside the city and the walls were cool. And I imagine, who would I be on Palm Sunday?

Where would I be? Would I have been maybe the woman who was healed? Or maybe I just saw it happen. Was it my child that was raised from the dead or healed?

And I thought as I put my hands on the cool and damp walls, I thought, no, no, they were not traitors.

There might have been people among the crowds who came there just because something exciting was happening. We see it all the time. There's an accident. People slow down.

[ 42 : 11 ] They sort of get traffic all kind of mixed up just because they want to see. Now, they may be concerned. I don't want to take that away from them. But there's a lot of looking.

There's a lot of innocent looking. If you've ever been to Yellowstone, every time you see a crowd of cars, you know they see an animal. And so, the best thing to do is pull up at the behind, stop and walk and see what they saw.

Just don't get too close. You don't want to be cheek to cheek with a bison. But there were people there who were just there for the excitement.

They were just there because, hey, there's a parade. Let's go. I heard there's something happen in Jerusalem. Let's go to the parade. But not all.

Because through these stories, through these weeks, people's lives were changed. And as I felt that wall behind me, I knew that there were a lot of people in that crowd who did not ever say crucify him.

[ 43 : 19 ] They did not. They wept. and they were heartbroken because this hero and healer and forgiver in their lives was being on the way to being harmed.

And they could see it coming. And so, there's a sense of as we continue to walk this road. Let's go to the next slide.

we get to the end of our road for that day, which is the Via Dolorosa. Last night, I found out that people aren't always all familiar with the song, the Via Dolorosa.

Sandy Patty sings the song, the Via Dolorosa. And the meaning of the term is the way of suffering. The way of suffering.

This was the Via Dolorosa. That was the road that Jesus would have carried the cross, that there would have been a lot of yelling and carrying on about him and criticizing and doing all of those things.

[ 44 : 31 ] And so, we weren't going down that road that day. And so, we stopped. And people then could do what they wanted. They could go to lunch.

They could go to the hotel. They could whatever they wanted. But some of us stayed. And we wandered. We didn't walk down the Via Dolorosa very far because we knew that we were going to be going that road the next day.

But what we did was, we stood there. And we touched the stone walls. And we looked at the cobblestones that were the ground in all of the city were made of.

And we looked down these narrow streets. And we believed. We believed that this, yes, was the road of suffering.

But it was the road to victory as well. And one of the things that you may likely always hear pastors say is you got to go to the cross before you can go to Easter Sunday.

[ 45 : 41 ] But I would back that up and say believe that the people who waved, you and I, who waved our palms in Hosanna, we are the ones who say I believe.

I will believe. I did believe. I've been touched and healed by the miracle stories and I have learned that God wants to heal me and you and we don't know the day or the time.

We don't know. We just know that Jesus wants to be near. Jesus wants us to ask for what we need.

Jesus wants us to cry out. Jesus wants us to cry out on behalf of our sisters and brothers in this space and spaces we can't even see. Because, let me go back, it might be midnight or midday, it's never early, never late, he's going to stand by what he claims.

I've lived enough to say that I know that my Jesus, your Jesus, proclaims that help is always on the way.

[ 47 : 07 ] May we believe it on this day. In Jesus' name, amen. Lord, the Lord be with you.

And also lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. God. It is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you.

In the beginning, you breathed life into raw materials, creating and animating containers of beauty and goodness. We, your holy vessels, were fired in the kiln of love until we shined with your light.

susceptible to shattering, we find ourselves broken, unable at times to remember your promise of repair. You remind us time and again that though broken, we are held in your presence and made whole by your grace.

And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn, holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.

[ 48 : 38 ] Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ. Holy you are for being a divine presence on earth. Your spirit anointed him as a container of grace in the form of preaching good news to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, setting at liberty those who are oppressed, and announcing that the time had come when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with those considered too broken for company. me. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from pain and destruction, and you gave birth to the path of healing and recovery, delivered us from despair and isolation, and made with us a new covenant by water and the spirit.

When Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always in the power of your word and Holy Spirit, we are not alone. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread.

He gave thanks to you. He broke the bread and gave it to his disciples and said, take and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

[ 50 : 20 ] And when the supper was over, he took the cup. He gave thanks to you. He gave it to his disciples and said, drink from this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Drink of this often in remembrance of me. And so in remembrance of the healing, life-transforming acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us your healing spirit through Christ, that we may be for the world, the body of Christ, healing agents in a broken world, offering the lifeblood of hope.

By your spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other and one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

[ 51 : 34 ] Through your son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit and your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, healing God now and forever. Amen. And now let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying, our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. I invite you to carefully remove your mask and the bottom of the chalice. The body of our Lord given for you.



Take and eat. the blood of our Lord shed for you.

[ 52 : 51 ] Take and drink. Glory to God. Amen. Amen. me.

I'd like to invite you all to stand if you're able as we sing together Hosanna. H Praise is rising Eyes are turning to you We turn to you Hope is stirring Hearts are yearning For you We long for you Cause when we see you We find strength to face the day In your presence

All our fears are washed away Washed away Hosanna Hosanna You are the God who saves us Worthy of all our praises Hosanna Hosanna Come have your way among us We welcome you here Lord Jesus Hear the sound of hearts returning to you We turn to you

In your kingdom In your broken lives Are with you You make us do Cause when we see you We find strength to face the day In your presence All our fears are washed away Washed away Hosanna Hosanna You are the God who saves us Worthy of all our praises Hosanna Hosanna

Come have your way among us We welcome you here Lord Jesus Hosanna Hosanna Come have your way among us We welcome you here Lord Jesus Hosanna Hosanna Hosanna Jesus is our Savior Amen Amen As you go from this place And whether you go to Good Friday Or you don't It doesn't change the fact That Jesus died for you

[ 57 : 22 ] Jesus loved for you Healed for you And Jesus is coming for you Right around the corner Anytime you call So go in that comfort And that peace And that grace And that Hosanna Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen

Amen Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 60 : 31 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.