

March 20, 2016 - Palm Sunday

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Date: 20 March 2016

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 00] We do welcome you here to church this morning.

We're glad to have you here for Palm Sunday. I want to mention a couple things about Holy Week. First of all, Wednesday night there are not a lot of programs. So the youth program, children's programs, Bible studies, a lot of those things are not meeting.

Choirs are and some other things. Check the little good news for your programs. On Thursday night we have our Seder service. Our Seder service is a reenactment of the Lord's Supper.

It's not a meal, so eat before you come. But it's a really moving experience where we go through that night again and we end up in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Our first opportunity for ministry on the clipboard is our Seder meal.

If you can help with that, it's greatly appreciated. On Friday we will have our next fish fry, our last fish fry. We served 670 dinners last week, which was a great amount.

[1 : 10] We appreciate all the help with that. We have one last one, and it's usually the largest and the busiest of it. So if you've been waiting to jump in and help out, this is a great week to join in with that fish fry.

And then after the fish fry, at 8 o'clock we have our Good Friday service. It's a very powerful and moving experience where we understand, if you will, and experience the cross and the crucifixion.

So we do invite you and encourage you to that experience. Saturday morning there will be over 1,000 people here for an Easter egg hunt. So bring the kids down, and if you want to help out, especially the men, we do appreciate having some guys around on the side of the road.

Women can do that too. We've just traditionally had men, but we certainly can put women out on the sides of the road too. It's just to keep the kids safe and to help out with all the activities there. That evening we will have a service.

It's a vigil service, so it's a little different than the normal services because it is Easter Eve, and so it's a remembrance of the baptism. And Sunday morning, Easter, next week we have two services at 9 o'clock and 11.

[2 : 14] What time? Yeah, and the reason for that is because we're trying to move over 1,000 people through the church at the same time, and so we need a little space between them. So we do two services on Easter.

We do invite and encourage you to come and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. There's other things and other things to share with you in our little good news, so take a look at that. In the meantime, let's turn our hearts and our souls to the Lord in prayer.

Dear God, there are so many things for us to think about, things going on in all of our lives. We just pray that you'll help us to focus now on you. I'm being blessed by you, touched by you, experiencing you in this place.

Come, Lord Jesus, and fill our hearts as we come to worship you. In Jesus' name, amen. I'd like to invite you, if you're able, to stand as we're going to sing together. Hosanna, loud hosanna.

Hosanna, loud hosanna.

[3 : 33] Hosanna, the little children sang. Hosanna, the little children sang. Through pillars, caught, and ten walls, the lovely and the bright.

To Jesus, who had blessed them, was folded to his breast. The children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

From all of it they followed, in an exultant crowd. The victor, pomp and waving, and chanting clear and loud.

The Lord of earth and heaven, rode on his lonely state. Nor scorned that little children, showed on his willing weight.

Teacher, we used your disciples. I tell you the truth. That if they were to be silenced in the rocks and stones themselves, we'd cry out.

[4 : 51] Hosanna, lift the highest. That nation's only sin. For Christ is our redeemer.

The Lord of heaven, our King. Oh, may we ever praise him. With heart and life and voice.

And in his blissful presence, eternally rejoice. The Lord be with you.

Take a moment if you will and greet your neighbor with the peace of the spirit. Amen.

25.

[6 : 02] Singing? Okay. As you're listening to the Tool Sankance's And Jesus hasn't something■ed

Will it get you? The God of free My God, O Santa is the highest.

Glory, glory, and glory to the King of Kings. Glory, glory, glory to the King of Kings.

Glory, glory, and glory to the King of Kings. Glory, glory, glory to the King of Kings.

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the heart. Holy Hashem, Holy Hashem, Holy Hashem.

[8 : 28] The Kiit 4000 of Tarouche and Olight growing. Please hold the door in my sight Oh, heaven in the high Oh, heaven in the high Oh, heaven in the high Oh, heaven in the high Oh, heaven in the high That was a great job. You like it when people clap for you? No? They should clap for Jesus. That's a good answer. That's a real good answer. You know, a lot of times in life we want people to clap for us. Do you know what this is? Yeah, it's a game called Apples to Apples. Have you ever played a game? Anybody?

Anybody here ever play a game? Yeah? Do you like to lose? No. We like to win, don't we? Of course we like to win. We play the game because we like to win! But really the reason we play the game is to be with other people, right? Spend some time with our parents or our siblings or maybe some friends or things like that. Because that's really the whole point of it. It's not just to win. Sometimes you lose. How many of you have ever lost a game? Yeah.

Life is like that. You're going to win some things. You're going to lose some things. But the main thing is to stay connected to people you love. And the same thing is true about life. Win or lose a few times, but the main thing is to stay connected to God. Because God will keep us safe, not just now, but forever and ever. All right? What do you guys thankful for? You want to share something? Raise your hand. Yeah.

All right.

Everything. Everything. My mom. My mom and dad. My baby sister. All the blessing God gives me. Way back there? Really? Seriously?

[11 : 19] My brother. All right. Anybody else? All right. Let's pray. Lord, we do thank you for the blessings you give to us. We thank you for the opportunity to be with the people we love. We thank you when we win. And we even thank you for being with us when we lose. Bless us always in life and be with us and keep Jesus close to us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Amen. Okay, you guys go out to church school. All the kids are welcome to go out to church school now. Jesus, you can go out to church school too.

Amen. Morning.

Morning. It's spring. That was about as enthusiastic. It's spring. Amen.

Amen. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing to have moved out of winter and into spring. And it's such a beautiful day, even though it's a little cold. It's okay. It's okay. It's going to get warmer and warmer.

[12 : 36] It's going to be wonderful, wonderful very, very soon. We are so blessed to be able to gather. Wasn't it a wonderful thing to have the children, to celebrate with the children on Palm Sunday?

Remember being a kid and waving palms and just loving that. How come we don't wave palms anymore? Get your palms up there. That's your palms? You all got them, right? Did you pick them up?

Can you wave them? Yeah. You remember that? Come on, wave them. Remember that? Wasn't it fun when you were a kid to wave palms? Yeah? You're allowed on Palm Sunday, you're allowed to get all kinds of exuberant, wave your palms, and get all excited about Jesus.

All right. As we continue in our exuberance over our blessed Savior and all that he has done for us, let's bring our gifts, tithes, and offerings as an act of worship. And we're also the Frost.

the Past or the Merc with a Word at the end of the camp. That's okay. Amen. Amen.

[13 : 34] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[17 : 51] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Dear Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise for this day and for the opportunity to gather and worship you.

We are so grateful, Lord, for who you are and all that you have done for us and that you care and love us very, very much. We ask that you would accept these gifts and all of the gifts that you have given us this day that we offer up to you.

We ask you to bless them and give us wisdom to know how to best use them for the furtherance of your kingdom. Many would be drawn to salvation in Jesus Christ and that we would all, as your church, continue to grow in grace.

[19 : 47] It is in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen. Please be seated. Along with all of the joys that we offer up to the Lord, we have some concerns to bring to you as well.

We can keep those prayers in our hearts this week and lift up these folks. Julie Beck was in the hospital and she is now home and we want to keep her in prayer for her continued healing.

Karen Mahalski has been having some trouble with kidney stones and she's got one good and stuck. And she's going to be needing surgery this week probably. And we just want to keep her in our prayers. She's asked us if we would pray for her in that.

Shirley Duchar, who we just actually prayed for a couple of weeks ago because she was in the hospital. Well, she's out, but her daughter Fran is now in ICU with a kidney infection and she is not doing well.

So Connie has gone down there. Connie Pomm. Yeah. Clifford. Connie Clifford has gone down there and her sister to be with the family and help look after things there, but we need to keep those folks in our prayers as well.

[20 : 57] Nikki Jumper is having some difficulties with her pregnancy. We want to keep her lifted up. And in addition to that, her mom, Lisa Earl, passed away this past week.

And so we need to keep that family lifted up. We have a couple of other families with folks who have passed away. And so we hold in prayer the families of Elaine McDonald and Kyle McArdle as well.

Lots of folks in need of prayers this week. And we know that we are faithful to pray because our God hears and answers our prayers. Amen? Amen. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Heavenly Father, what a blessing it is to be in your presence, to know that you hear us, to know that you answer us, to know that even those prayers that are in our hearts that we haven't spoken out loud are things that you know.

And as we lift them up too, you hear them and answer them. Lord God, we pray for all those who are sick and infirm, who are needing a healing touch from you.

[22 : 13] We do ask that you would touch them, Lord. Make them whole from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet. Make them whole in their spirits and their souls and in their bodies. Make us whole, Lord.

We pray also for those who care for loved ones who are sick, who are infirm, who are going through difficult times.

We just ask in Jesus' name that you would give each one the compassion that they need, the skills that they need, the love and the mercy. That you would work through them by your great power to touch their lives.

Father, we pray in Jesus' name also for those who are grieving losses. Lord God, it is so difficult to lose those, especially those who are young, when death has come unexpectedly.

We ask in Jesus' name for you to draw close by your Holy Spirit to those who are grieving. Let them feel your love.

[23 : 26] Let them feel your mercy and compassion. Give them help, Lord. All the help that they need. Lord, we pray for those also who are lost.

Lord, people who are lost, who are lost as far as where they are in this world, who are away from their loved ones and are not able to be found.

Lord, we pray for those who are lost in terms of where they should go and what they should do, who don't know what their purpose is.

And we pray for those who are lost, Lord God, because they don't know you. We just ask in Jesus' name that you would touch them.

Send them the help that they need. Bring people into their path who can bring them out of not being where they need to be. And we pray for those who are lost, that they would be found.

[24 : 36] We pray that you would equip each and every one in your church to be able to help those who are in need of help, whatever way you called us to be and to do.

We pray, Lord, as we hear your word, that it would wash over us this day. That you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts and minds to understand and receive all that you have for us this day.

That you would help us to understand those things about you, those things about what goes on around us in this world that are so difficult to understand.

Lord God, on that Palm Sunday, that day when people were so exuberant in their praise of Jesus, they recognized him as king.

They knew that he was to be king somehow, but they didn't understand what that meant. So often, Lord, we don't understand why things are the way they are in this world.

[25 : 47] Help us by your word, by your grace, by your mercy to understand just a little better who you are and what that means in our lives.

Be with Pastor Tom as he delivers the message that you've given him. Let it be a blessing to him and to us. Lord God, by your power, by your mercy, make all of our worship to be pleasing in your sight and a blessing to you.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Good morning. Today's scripture reading is from the book of John, chapter 12, verses 17 through 28. Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word.

[27 : 20] Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. So the Pharisees said to one another, See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him.

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethesda in Galilee, with a request. Sir, they said, we would like to see Jesus.

Philip went to tell Andrew. Andrew and Philip, in turn, told Jesus. Jesus replied, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed.

But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it. While anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me.

And where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?

[28 : 21] No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it, and will glorify it again. The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thunder.

Others said an angel had spoken to him. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. They all city back in 66.

Four touchdowns. And I'm not talking the whole year. One game. One game. One game. One game. One game. Isn't it great to be the hero? Isn't it wonderful when people cheer for you, and everybody thinks you're fantastic, to win the trophy, to get the award?

they throw a parade. Jesus was coming into the city and everybody showed up. They're waving the palm branches, they're singing Hosanna. They're calling him king. He's fulfilling prophecies.

I love it when you win. About a week ago or so, my team won. I am a graduate of the University of Buffalo and the Bulls won on the final buzzer. It was like, yeah! And then the women won. Yeah!

[29 : 40] And then Thursday they lost. Oh, have you noticed that life is a mix of joys and sorrows, of miseries and celebrations?

Jesus came into the city with this crowd cheering him and celebrating him and he says, Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say? Because he knew he was facing the cross. Beyond the palms was the crucifixion. Life is a glimpse into hell and life is a glimpse into hell.

The worst of what we experience is only a touch of the worst of what we could experience for eternity. And the best of what we experience is just a foretaste of the glory and wonder and joy God has for us. It's like a commercial so that we'll all have some desire to experience the wonder and the blessings forever. Because we want the victories, we want the joy, we want the blessings.

But with life comes the pain and the sorrows and the struggles that we have to endure. Have you noticed everybody's sick? This is a great winter because there was like almost no snow. I take this winter every year every year. Amen? It's like living in North Carolina. It's sweet. Except I think everybody's sick.

Like forever. And you do know what's going to happen in about a month or two. The bugs are going to come at us like crazy. This is going to be the worst year for bugs ever. The joys, the sorrows, the blessings, the curses, they come together. I had a seminary professor who when you'd ask her how she was doing, she'd say, I'm halfway between Lord have mercy and thank you Jesus. I always loved that. That just seemed the fit life. The Bible says God created the world and everything he made was good. But the problem is is that somewhere along the line, the sin that we people brought into the world broke it. So this creation that we see is only a part of the perfection that God intended. There's a lot of ways in which it's just plain broken. All of nature is not perfect and good. I've watched my dogs torture a little mouse for fun. The world is not all perfect and good. There's brokenness and pain, but there's joy and there's blessing so that we will understand what we're supposed to look forward to. In Romans chapter 8,

[32 : 32] David says, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. That our current sufferings, our hurt and pain are just a little tiny piece that causes us to desire to go to the glory of the next world. Some suffering is just caused by the condition, the reality of the world we exist in. Some suffering, however, is caused by the decisions other people make. The crowd cheered for Jesus. And crowds can cheer in a way that can just touch your heart.

But the crowds can jeer too. They can criticize and complain. It was festival time. It was the Sabbath day. And in western New York, we know what a festival is, right? Pretty soon we're going to start having festivals every two hours. I mean, there is a festival for the mustard people and a festival for the cheese people and a festival for the beer people. And the festival, you know what I'm talking about, right? There is a festival for everybody. And you go to a festival, you're kind of hanging out at one of the food trucks or something. All of a sudden, somebody says, hey, there's something going on over there.

Hey, what's going on over there? We all go over there. That was what happened. They were all over there getting their, you know, Passover kebab. And they heard, Jesus is coming into town.

Ah, cool. Let's all cheer for Jesus. This is cool. We like this. But Hosanna, they even are yelling, praise God for the king of Israel. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And five days, five days later, the same crowd changed their cheers into shouts of crucify him. Crucify him.

Hang him on a cross and torture him and kill him. The decisions of people can lift us up. The decisions of people can break us down. Because people are broken.

[34 : 49] Just like you and me. You see, the problem is, it's really easy to see what's wrong with you. It's a lot harder to see what's wrong with me. I bet you can tell me. You see, that's how it works.

So we shout out to God, dear God, forgive my sin and smite that guy over there. Right? Get them. Blast them, Lord. And please forgive me. Why do we have these problems? Because we're all broken people. We all have our mistakes. We all have our faults. We all have our problems. We all have these shortcomings. And we make decisions that can rip people's lives apart.

This week, I had to deal with a family that lost their 22-year-old son by a decision he made. Parents are broken hearted. We're broken hearted. How do you deal with that? They didn't cause it.

They just received the pain from it. We've all had that experience, haven't we? Where somebody else does something we didn't have anything to do with. And the next thing you know, we're suffering.

And I bet if we were honest, we'd all say that there was a time we did or said something that caused that same pain for someone else. Imagine my job. You know what I do for a living? I talk.

[36 : 15] Imagine how many times I have the opportunity to say the wrong thing. Routinely. And I know it. I know it. And people get hurt by what we say and what we do. And sometimes we don't even realize we're doing it.

Now, some people, they choose to hurt other people. Typically because they're feeling a pain themselves. They're hurting inside and they lash out at someone else. The Pharisees say it's not fair.

Whole world's going over to Jesus. It's not fair. You know how hard we work. We work all the time at the God stuff. We've got all the God rules. We do all the God rituals. We are there to do the God thing day and night. We care about the people. We're there when they're hurting. We've been looking out for them to keep the Romans from hurting them. And this Jesus just strolls into town and the whole crowd is like, oh, Jesus is wonderful. Ah, we'll get that Jesus. We feel that because we've been taught to be competitive for the beginning of our lives. We play these games. It's not whether you win or lose. It's how you play the game.

No, it's not. It's about winning. We want to win. Because everybody tells us we've got to win. Why can't you get good grades like Johnny? Why can't you dress better like Sally? Why can't you be a winner like this one?

Why can't you get everything right like that one? How come you're not as successful as so-and-so? We hear it all our lives and all we want to say is we want to win one time. Some guy like Jesus strolls in and just everything is handed to them.

[37 : 59] And we get angry and hurt and we lash out. Now, I'm not trying to make apologies for the Pharisees, but you understand we can be those people. We can be caught in that pain and that hurt.

We can be worried about whether we win or lose. In the eighth chapter of Mark, it says, what does it profit a person if they gain the whole world and they lose their soul?

We can find ourselves like these people did on the wrong side of God. Jesus says in this passage that it's about God's glory. He three or four times mentions glory.

Glorify your name. Glorify your name, God. Because that's the point of life. Sometimes we suffer because of the nature of the world. Sometimes we suffer because of what other people do. Sometimes we suffer because it's what Christians are called to do for God.

This can be one of the most difficult things to deal with. How could God want us to suffer? And yet, Peter, the greatest disciple, in 1 Peter, he says to us these words.

[39 : 20] Move it along. There you go. Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery ordeal that comes on you to test you as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. How many of you are rejoicing in suffering?

I'm not seeing a lot of hands going up. How many of you like fiery trials? Of course not. But when we face them, do we face them as people of God with his strength and his conviction and his presence in our lives? Or do we face them with selfishness and focus only on us?

Life is a test. A glimpse into heaven and a glimpse into hell. And God wants to see what we're made of. Would we be willing to suffer the way Christ suffered? To go through his passion?

Passion. This week they call Passion Week. Somebody asked me, why do they call it the passion? Well, because in the original, in the original Latin, passion meant suffering.

Passion meant to suffer. So it's very simple, the suffering of Jesus. But we've changed passion, haven't we? We've turned passion into something that gets us all excited. We've changed the meaning of the word. And that's what we want to do is change the purpose and meaning of our lives from being what we're supposed to be to being what we want to be. To working for the glory of God into worrying about the glory of us. And God is testing us. God is testing us to see what we will do. Jesus said, I know I want to pray for this to go away. But this is the reason I came. In the garden of Gethsemane, he says, Daddy, if you just take this cup away from me. But not my will. Your will. Because it's the will of God to save the world, to bring the world to his joy, to his possibilities, to his blessings.

[41 : 47] And he's looking for some heroes to do it. Jesus says in verse 24 that a seed doesn't produce anything unless it dies. Unless it goes into the ground and breaks open and dies. And then it produces a crop a hundredfold. One of the strangest things about the Christian faith that doesn't even make sense is that Christianity grows whenever people suffer and it shrinks whenever people have a good life.

Look at the world we live in. Christianity is growing by leaps and bounds in China where it's not even really particularly illegal. In Africa where people get killed for being Christians. In the Middle East where they're taking Christians heads off, the church is booming. And in the United States and Europe where it's legal, supported, and every politician talks about, God bless America. It struggles. It's weak. It hurts.

It hurts. Because God works through heroes. Not through people who are self-centered and focused only on, what will I get out of this? We need some real heroes. We've changed our idea of hero into something really weird.

We think that somebody who somehow does something phenomenal in the public setting is someone that we should admire in incredible ways. And we've turned it all around to us. Kind of like, well, you know this guy.

Let me tell you something. I served my country. I played high school football. Four touchdowns in one game. Yet I'm not exempt from state and federal taxes.

[43 : 41] Now is this any way America should treat its heroes? You just flash that badge at some registered voter, buddy. I like that last part. Flash that badge at some registered voter.

I used to when I played football. I played sports in high school. I used to when I played football, we'd watch and there'd be these guys over on the sidelines. And there's 20s and 30s hanging out to watch us practice football. And we'd sit there and think, oh man, I hope I'm not better when I'm 20 or 30 something years old. I hope I have more in my life than looking back to what I did when I was in high school. Now if you're in high school, enjoy it. Embrace it.

Well, let me tell you, there's a whole life ahead of you beyond high school. Amen? All right. If you peak in high school, I won't use the other P word, because it is sad. Do we live for God? Or do we live for ourselves? Jesus puts it very clearly in verse 25. He says, anyone who loves their life, anyone who loves their life will lose it.

While anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternity. We have to be willing to let go of our glory so God's glory can shine through us.

Because God transfers the faith heart to heart, person to person. And he's looking for us to do that.

[45 : 25] Some pain is part of life. Some pain is because of what other people, some pain is just a test to see whether we will stand up to be the Christians we're supposed to be when God calls us to these choices.

God honors them and offers them eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me. And where I am, my servant also will be. And my father will honor the ones who serve me. And let's remember where Jesus went. He went to the cross. Are we willing to die to who we are so God becomes alive to the world around us?

Philippians chapter 3. Paul says, I know, I want to know Christ. Yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participate in his suffering, becoming like him in his death. So somehow attaining the resurrection from the dead. Really? How many of us really want to go through the cross? How many of us really are willing to give up who and what we are? Our joy for God's honor. Christ died for the world to live.

Not because he wanted to. Not because he thought it would be fun. But because he knew this had to happen. And sometimes heroes are the people who step up when something has to happen. In the book of John, Jesus talks about love. This is what he says. My command is this, love each other as I have loved you.

And what does that mean? Greater love has no one than this, that they lay down their life for someone else. Do you think when a soldier goes into the battlefield, they don't have the idea that they might be facing death or at least injury? Do you believe that when someone stands up to a bully, they don't think they might get beaten? Do you think that when a nurse holds the hand of somebody in a hospital who's fading and struggling, that they might not have to go through heartache? Do you think that being a friend doesn't mean that you might be called in the middle of the night about something you don't want to do? Real heroes. Real heroes are willing to step up.

[47 : 43] The mother who runs in the middle of the night because they hear their baby cry. The firefighter goes into a burning building and expects they're going to face the flames. Jesus who went to the cross to die so others could live. This sermon is for Christians. But how do Christians get that kind of strength? How do they get the ability to have that kind of courage? It's by knowing and caring and loving the Lord Jesus Christ who touches our heart and the people that God has given us in our lives.

We don't think about it. We do it without thinking. Today in the early service there was a dad and two little girls coming up to communion and the littlest one he's got in his arms and the other one he wants to have walk, which I understand is a dad, right? They get heavy, okay? So the other one is going, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy. He's like, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy. So I see him pick her up.

Now he's carrying two kids in each arm coming up for communion. I don't know how he's going to take communion. I didn't see that piece. I'm thinking, ah, that's right. Why did he do it? Because it's the right thing to do. Because it's what you do for people you love. Not because it was convenient, not because it made him happy, but because it's what you do. God reached down into our world to lift us up out of our brokenness and carry us when we're hurting and we're struggling. And God expects us to reach down into other people's brokenness to do the same. Amen. And that's what a hero is.

That's what God is calling us to. Yes, the crowds are great when you have that opportunity of a Palm Sunday. And I'm not talking about suffering for the sake of being able to say, oh, it's so hard on me.

I work so hard. I do so much. We've got too many people got a martyr complex, you know, the people got to tell us everything that's going wrong and that they have problems with in life.

[49 : 51] And we'll say, oh, you poor soul. Real heroes don't have to talk about their suffering. They just do what they need to do because people are still looking for Jesus. And they came to Jesus and they said, we want to see Jesus. And they didn't go right to him. They went first to Philip when Philip took them to Andrew and Andrew took them to Jesus. And that's what people are going to do with us.

You are probably the best Bible your friends will ever read. We bring them to God by embracing God. Embrace the joy, but embrace the cross. We have a lot of Christians who just want to go from from Palm Sunday, Hosannas to Easter Sunday, hallelujahs. They want to go from the celebrations of Christ as King to Christ as the resurrected Lord without understanding what got them to the resurrection in the first place.

Without the cross. Without the cross. There's no resurrection. There's no hallelujahs. There's no Christmas. There's no salvation. There's no eternal life. There's no hope. There's no joy. There's no strength.

There's no God. We go through the cross to get to the glory. One of the things I admire about this congregation is they go through the cross.

You know, we create on this Sunday was always called Palm Sunday. Now they call it Palm Passion Sunday because they know that most Christians have never experienced good Friday. The closest thing they come to that is getting a fish product. They never experienced the passion of Christ.

[51 : 39] But this church has hundreds of people come on Friday to experience the cross. Because if we don't understand what Jesus really went through, we don't understand the glory and the joy he's really embracing. I want you to embrace joy. I don't want you to go around as sad sad.

I want you to laugh. You know what I mean. It feels good to laugh, doesn't it?

People get a little lightheaded. It's good to experience joy. I want you to experience the resurrection, the hallelujahs, the hosannas.

I don't want you to go around in life feeling miserable and thinking that being a Christian is some kind of terrible, awful, miserable, downer experience. The joy of the Lord is my strength.

Amen. But sometimes God calls us to be heroes too. And the glory of God is the purpose of life. That's what Jesus keeps pointing to.

[53 : 11] This was not an easy week in my world. I got a phone call at 2 o'clock in the morning from one family. Hello, Pastor Tom. What? Huh? What?

Who? And they're talking to me. I'm like, hang on just a minute, please. Hi, this is Pastor Tom. How can I help you? You ever do that? It's like 2 o'clock in the morning.

I don't know who's on the phone. What are you talking about? Why are you calling me at 2 in the morning? Why are you calling me? Why are you calling me? Why are you calling me? Because when people are at the end of the rope, they call somebody. I had to deal and be with and cry with people who lost their son.

I had to work with a family who lost their father. I had someone call me up and say, do I go to my sister who's dying? I had my family struggle.

And I walked through other people's family struggles. It wasn't an easy week. Not all of life is an easy week. Sometimes suffering comes. Even in the middle of blessing.

[54 : 18] The heroes stand up to it. And they show that they really have the strength of God. We need to remember the destiny of people's souls for all eternity is that sake.

And maybe even the destiny of our own soul. Because the purpose of this life is to get to the next one. As it says in the book of Revelation, After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count.

From every nation, tribe, people, and language. And by the way, just in case you think we're the only ones going to heaven, just read that again. Every nation, tribe, people, and language. Standing before the throne, before the Lamb.

And they were wearing white robes. And they were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God. Who sits on the throne.

And to the Lamb who was willing to go to the cross. So that we could live forever and forever. I see the king of glory Coming on the throne.

[55 : 44] Coming on the cloud with my A ball and a tree. A ball and a tree.

I face the love and a tree. Watching over all I see.

The people sing. The people sing. Hosanna.

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 in the highest Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest

Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest Hosanna in the highest Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest Hosanna in the highest Hosanna in the highest

[59 : 16] There is a candle in every soul, some bright and burning, some dark and cold.

There is a spirit who brings a fire, ignites a candle and makes it strong.

Carry your candle unto the darkness, sing how the world has confused and torn.

Oh, weld your candle for all to see it. Take your candle, go light your world.

Take your candle, go light your world. Oh, weld your candle.

[60 : 35] See how this night to light this old candle, some other way.

Take now your sister. She's never up and liked you. Still hold the candle without a flame.

Carry your candle from the darkness. See how the light is. Sing how the lonely, a time and more.

Hold out your candle, the world is seeing it. Take your candle, go light your world.

Take your candle, go light your world. We are a family whose hearts are facing.

[61 : 45] Let's raise our candles right on the sky. Pray to our hearts. Pray to our hearts. In the name of Jesus, make us a beacon.

In the darkness, God may sign. Take your candle, take your candle, go light your world. Carry your candle, come to the darkness. Take your candle, go light your world. Carry your candle, come to the darkness. Seek out of them, bless.

Deceive and fall. Hold out your candle, for all to see it.

Take your candle, go light your world. Take your candle, oh, my Lord. Carry your candle, to love your world. Carry your candle, thegeht of the darkness. Carry your candle, come to the darkness.

Carry your candle, come to the darkness. Sing out of them, bless. Sing out of them, bless. Confuse and toll. Hold out your candle, go light your candle, for all to see it.

[62 : 52] Take your candle, your light, your world Take your candle, your light, your world Please be seated It's so easy to see what other people do wrong That causes suffering, isn't it?

We could just fix them We could just take care of their problem We could just sort them out and get them straightened out But you know where we start, don't you? We don't start with them You're not going to change other people until you change you We change the world by changing ourselves And other people say, I want what they have I want to see Jesus in them So we go to God To confess who we are and who we're not And ask God to stir up in us the spirit The power, the wonder, the hero That he designed us to be Let's pray, shall we?

Dear God in heaven I've sinned You know that You know what I've done wrong And so do I Forgive me, Lord Help me to be what I'm supposed to be Take away my sin Give me the strength Give me your spirit That I might live with courage Bring the kingdom of God On earth As it is in heaven In Jesus' name we pray Amen Don't be afraid To live in the glory of God God calls us to be something more Than we can even imagine we can be And he offers and promises glory In the end There's nothing this world can do

Nothing, not even a cross That takes away our glory Jesus decided to forgive you The day you were born You know that? The cross was on his heart The day you were born He was prepared to go to Calvary Before you spoke your first word All he's waiting is for you To be us In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven Glory to God Amen Be not afraid I go before you always

Come follow me And I will give you rest Blessed are you poor For the kingdom shall be theirs Blessed are you that we've been born For one day you shall laugh And if wicked tongues insult And hate you all And hate you all Because of me Blessed, blessed are you Be not afraid I go before you always, come follow me, and I will give you rest.

[67 : 24] Amen.

If you seek to serve Jesus Christ, you are welcome at the table this morning. So come. Come and receive all that God has for you. Come and receive blessings as you receive Jesus Christ into your light.

The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks to Christ.

It is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. In love, you made us for yourself.

And when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, your love remained steadfast. You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the Easter feast.

[68 : 49] That renewed by your word and sacraments and fervent in prayer and works of justice and mercy, we may come to the fullness of grace that you have prepared for those who love you.

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, 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, whom you sent in the fullness of time to redeem the world.

He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant being born in our likeness. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

He took upon himself our sin and death and offered himself a perfect sacrifice for the sin of the whole world.

[69 : 57] By the baptism of his suffering, death and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread and he gave thanks to you. He broke the bread and gave it to his disciples. He said, take, eat.

This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

And when the supper was over, he took the cup and he gave you thanks and praise. And he gave it to his disciples. He said, drink from this, all of you. This is the cup of my blood.

The blood of the new covenant poured out for you. Poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin. Do this as often as you drink in remembrance of me.

[71 : 03] And so, in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving 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, the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world, the body of Christ redeemed by his blood.

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.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen. Shall we pray together with the confidence of the disciples of Jesus Christ, the prayer he taught?

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[72 : 31] 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. Will those serving this morning please come forward.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. golden ■■■■ Amen.

Pray for prayers for healing and anointing. To light a candle as your prayer. Come, experience the Lord Jesus.

[74 : 49] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Please stand if you're able as we sing hosannas to our Lord. Amen. Praise His rising, our love turning to you.

We turn to you. Holy, scurrying hearts are yearning for you.

[78 : 32] We love for you. When we see you, we've gone straight. We face the day.

In your presence, all our fears are washed away. Wash the way. Wash the way. Hosanna! Hosanna!

Hosanna! You are the God who saves us. Worthy of all our praise. Hosanna!

Hosanna! Hosanna! Come every way among us. We look when you hear the Jesus.

In the sound of hearts returning to you Return to you In your kingdom broken lives are in you To be made of you Because when we see you we find strength The pace of day In your presence all our fears are washed away Washed away Hosanna Hosanna You are the God who saves us

[80 : 30] Worthy of all our praise Hosanna Hosanna Come and your way among us How can you hear my Jesus Hosanna Hosanna Come have your way among us We welcome you here Lord Jesus You know that fellow I was telling you about He actually had two little girls and a baby I was looking at all the little babies that's bobbing around in the sanctuary this morning Seemed to be a few extra little babies bobbing around You know It's not easy to bring a baby to church I get that I understand that You know We have nurseries and cry broods and everything else

We like having the babies here Amen Absolutely Absolutely You know the heroes aren't always the people who do amazingly huge things They're important and we need them And maybe God's calling you to step into that Sometimes the heroes are just the ones who say Yeah I'm going to go through the struggle Of bringing this little baby to church Even the little babies are going What is going on here Because somewhere along the line They catch Jesus Somewhere along the line They find God Because their parents were heroes to them God be a hero When somebody needs someone to talk to in the middle of the night Be the hero When somebody needs someone to cry with Be the hero When somebody needs somebody to cheer them on And to applaud them Because they don't get that applause much Be the hero Somebody needs to have someone pick them up And lead them to Jesus Be the hero May God bless you Go out and change the world Bring the kingdom of God on earth As it is in heaven

So in his peace Amen