Palm Sunday B 2021 Jesus dies in victory so that we can also

The King who rides on a donkey is blessed by the adoring crowd going up to Jerusalem. Their psalm of praise is Hosanna, save us! They bless their king from the house of the Lord! Within 5 days, Jesus is rejected as their king and their songs of praise quickly becomes: Crucify him, crucify him!

The King of the Jews is traded for a murderer named Barabbas. Jesus is crowned with thorns, cloaked in royal purple, and hailed by Roman soldiers in pitiful mockery. They spit on him and strike his head with a reed.

See how quickly palms of victory are replaced by a reed of buffeting and mockery!

Yet Jesus remains king. He does not forfeit his kingdom nor do the songs of praises of angels and forgiven sinners diminish. He keeps God’s word by saving us. He dies in victory when it looks like He has failed and all is lost.

How can this be? Can we trust God’s word when it looks like Jesus goes down in defeat?

But God’s word is fulfilled in the way that Jesus died. The psalm that is spoken from his bruised mouth: My God my God why have you forsaken me” also says: All who see me, mock me.”

So is his death a bitter defeat or a divine promise being kept? Is Jesus king not only of the Jews but of all and if so how can He save us by such a humiliating death? If the bible is a mythological fiction of adoring worshippers who have made Jesus into God, then why would all four gospels record him die this kind of death? There would be only positive and powerful things recorded in such a book.

Can we celebrate Palm Sunday of Victory in light of our Lord’s Passion on the cross?

If our Lord’s death came by the hands of jealous Jews and the coward Roman governor Pilate, then where is God who promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through him and the God who gave Pilate authority to rule?

To feel sorry for Jesus because he was innocent and stand crying beside the daughters of Jerusalem, forgets to cry over our own sin. The physical pain Jesus suffered was indeed great, but does not compare to the pain we deserve by living as if we mattered most and as if our feelings are the only connection to reality.

What is real can only come from God’s words. If God did not say it then it cannot be!

What are to make of Christ’s suffering? Yes we are to be terror stricken and horrified at such a bloody sight. This is none other than God’s righteous anger at sin, our sin, all sin. This is the physical and spiritual suffering that God’s justice demands. It is the wake up call for the sleepy that our sins are serious and that God demands such a price be paid.

So it was not Roman or Jew that caused our Lord’s suffering but my sin. This was the blow that God’s justice gave and instead of the blows on my head, they came to the head of One who never thought of himself first nor was moved by pride or conceit.

See how great your sin is to demand such suffering! Behold your king taking your place!

Jesus dies for you and he dies in victory! How can this be? His suffering shows the greatness of His love. His death is victorious for does what his father asked.

We hear of his victory from the cross. Both in the seven words he utters there: Father forgive them, Today you will be with me in paradise, Behold your mother and behold your son, My God my God why have you forsaken me, It is finished, I thirst, Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

And in the way that Christ speaks them. Not by way of whimper or whisper but in a **loud voice**. Jesus cries out loudly in victory. Any criminal dyeing by crucifixion dies by asphyxiation. There is not enough oxygen, resulting in unconsciousness and then death. But see how the lungs of Jesus are filled to cry out loudly, and in victory! His lungs, his body are holy. He cries out victory, It is finished. He has done all things well.

But faith needs no such proof. It believes because it knows that all sin is carried by the King. His suffering is the price of divine justice and He is moved by divine love. For by this kind of death, the love of God is established. This is the glorious day that the Lord has made. The stone rejected by the builders is the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord’s doing (not ours) and it is marvelous in our eyes.

God has healed our spiritual blindness and given us eyes of faith to be comforted by the suffering of Christ. God has taken your sin and put them on Christ. So do not hang on to your sin as if you could carry them. You do not make your heavenly proud by carrying your sin around. In fact, you make God a liar by doing such a proud thing.

Hanging on to your sin not a godly act. It is what Judas did. It is the coward’s way of pride that rejects Christ. You cannot cover your sin nor pay for them. Faith alone trusts God’s word that Christ has carried your sin, died your death and has given you peace.

Do not waste this opportunity and think you can do it. You cannot. Do not wait until your dying breath is about to fade and have no where to go and are bound by your terror-stricken conscience.

Meditate now on Christ’s sufferings and see how he died in victory to save you and to save all.

Your king died to give you peace with the Father in heaven. Christ is your king who gives you peace now and in the hour of your death. Not as the world gives peace.

The world calls peace when there is no more suffering and no more pain. It thinks of peace when poverty and sickness are gone. But that is not the peace that your king gives. No, he allows the evil which is laid on you to fall on Him instead. He does not change the evil but he changes you. He removes the person from evil by taking it on himself. He does not remove the evil nor the suffering from you. Instead, he gives you peace with the father that lasts forever.

Judas had his heart set on wealth and glory in this life. His death did not end his suffering but began it. Jesus is your king who died in victory so that you are safe and at peace when you die!