

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



Weekly Sermon Series

Taking Root: Digging in the Dirt...Kneeling on Holy Ground Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 21:1-11

You have, no doubt, had mentors that you admired on your journey through life. In respect for them, you have assimilated some of their best qualities into your own character. Many of us look to Jesus for such as he displays the qualities of God's image in his own life. In this Holy Week we witness Jesus displaying humility, confidence, servanthood, and obedience as he follows steps to the cross.

As the crowd gathers near Jerusalem to prepare to celebrate Passover, Jesus takes this moment to publicly proclaim who he really is. He rides a donkey, which we have learned is a sign of a peaceful, humble leadership (rather than riding a white stallion indicative of a victory king as we see in Revelation, and as we often see in movies). The path on which he rides becomes "holy ground" as people accept him as the Messiah. They cover the ground with their cloaks and with palm branches. This same palm branch symbol was used by Judas Maccabeus on his coins and in his reign, following his defeat of the Romans decades earlier. Perhaps people see a new King Judas or King David on the brink of victory.

Then Jesus goes to a private room and celebrates Passover with his close friends. Here he shows a path of servanthood, in the washing of feet, in the declaration of his coming death, in the announcement of betrayal, and in the institution of the New Covenant.

Glory fades as dirt is being dug up by the Pharisees and other church leaders in order to undo the Jerusalem victory march. Of course the true dirt being unearthed is our sin in totality that would be laid upon Jesus on his cross of sacrifice.

- What do you do today with your dirt (sin) that keeps messing up your life?
- Do you repent? Do you seek God's wisdom? Do you accept forgiveness?
- Do you turn over a new leaf as a result of that forgiveness? Are you growing deeper in faith, rooted in Jesus?
- When you pray do you go to your knees? As you enter into conversation with God, do you know you are on holy ground in God's presence?

Dear Lord Jesus, as we journey through life, help us to remember that you took our sin to death with you on that precious Good Friday. And once you accomplished that, you rose up to give us new life; and you offer that option to us through daily forgiveness. Help us to take on your character as your servant Paul did, and be witnesses of your power and presence in our world. Amen.

-- Week of April 5, 2009