

Palm Sunday Sermon Notes - April 14

Usually, on Palm Sunday, we utilize a gospel text on the Triumphal Entry. This massive parade takes the same route as the Maccabees when they won Jerusalem back and restored the desecrated temple from the Greeks. It takes place at one of end of Jerusalem at the same time that Pontius Pilate, representing the conquering power of Rome, enters Jerusalem through another gate! The Prince of Peace parade is in all 4 of the Gospels.

We are going to be utilizing a teaching text today - from Mark 2:21-27. This text is very far apart from the excitement of the Passover entry. However, I may have a tie-in, if you would permit me a story from Leonard Sweet:

A man tried to teach his cocker spaniel to speak for his dinner. Every evening for two months, just before giving the dog his food, the man would hold the bowl of chow in his hands, bark twice to show the pet the desired response, and then give the food to the dog, who was now confused by all the prior proceedings. Finally the day of testing arrived and the man was anxious to see how well his canine companion would perform. He prepared the food, held it in his

hand, gave a command for the dog to bark but nothing happened.

He waited for a long while but still nothing happened. Very disappointed, he put the food on the floor but the dog would not eat. It was only then, after he had tried everything, that he realized his dilemma. The dog would not eat until the man barked twice!

It's one thing to know the "what." It's another thing to understand the "why."

I love Jesus and I know you do too - but what we have today gives us even MORE reason to praise our Savior.

To set up our text - Jesus is teaching the people and there is a group of Pharisees among the people. Folks have just asked him about fasting because both the Pharisees and the followers of John the Baptist fast more than Jesus and His disciples. Jesus tells them about the bridegroom being taken...so that means Jesus is trying to tell them something about His death, all the way back in Mark 2!

Mark 2:21-27 (Voice)

These are new things I'm teaching, and they can't be reconciled with old habits. Nobody would ever use a piece of new cloth to patch an old garment because when the patch shrinks, it pulls away and makes the tear even worse. And nobody puts new, *unfermented* wine into old wineskins because if he does, the wine will burst the skins; they would lose both the wineskins and the wine. No, the only appropriate thing is to put new wine into new wineskins.

One Sabbath Jesus and His disciples were walking through a field of grain; as they walked, His disciples *grew hungry*. They began to pull from the stalks *and eat*.

The Pharisees confronted Him.

Pharisees: Did You see that? Why are Your disciples doing what our law forbids on the Sabbath?

Jesus (*turning toward the Pharisees*): Do you remember the story about what *King David* and his followers did when they were hungry and had nothing to eat?

They said nothing, so He continued.

Jesus: David went into the house of God, when Abiathar was the high priest, and ate the bread that was consecrated to God. Now our laws say no one but the priests can eat that holy bread; *but when David was hungry, he ate* and also shared the bread with those who followed him. [1 Samuel 21:3-6]

27 The Sabbath was made for *the needs of* human beings, and not the other way around.

THIS IS THE WORD OF GOD FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD!

THANKS BE TO GOD! Amen

Let's take the last part first. The Pharisees are upset with Jesus and His disciples for not following Sabbath laws. Why is that a big deal? Well, it is a day of rest, set apart as holy. It is a time to be with family and honor God. It is huge as a separation of the everyday and the holy. It is a part of the Jewish past as well as integral to their identity.

According to Chabad.org (they promote Judaism and have a daily Torah lecture) "some basic activities from which we refrain on Shabbat:

- writing, erasing, and tearing;
- business transactions;
- driving or riding in cars or other vehicles;
- shopping;
- using the telephone;
- turning on or off anything which uses electricity, including lights, radios, television, computer, air-conditioners and alarm clocks;
- cooking, baking or kindling a fire;
- gardening and grass-mowing;
- doing laundry;

Does all this mean that Shabbat is somewhat of a miserable affair, where we sit hungry in the dark? Not at all. It simply means that we have to prepare for Shabbat in advance, so that, on the contrary, we celebrate in luxury, without doing any of the actual work, on Shabbat.”

Shabbat is observed from a few minutes before sunset on Friday evening until the appearance of three stars in the sky on Saturday night. Shabbat is ushered in by lighting candles and reciting a blessing. Traditionally, three festive meals are eaten: in the evening, in the early afternoon, and late in the afternoon. The evening meal and the early afternoon meal typically begin with a blessing

called *kiddush* and another blessing recited over two loaves of challah (that braided egg bread). Shabbat is closed the following evening with a *havdalah* (meaning 'separation'):

“Blessed art thou, God, our Lord, King of the Universe who distinguishes holiness from the everyday, light from dark, Israel from the nations, the seventh day from the six workdays. Blessed art thou, God, who distinguishes holiness from the everyday.”

From before the time of Jesus until today, Shabbat, Sabbath, is a big deal; and Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.

Now about the wineskins and the patches for the clothing. Jesus is teaching New Things.

Remember at times people are AMAZED at His teaching because He taught *with authority* (from Mark 1)?

Stephen Hultgren is the Director of a Lutheran college in Australia. He states:

“The word for authority, *exousia*, is related to the verb *exesti*, meaning ‘it is free’ or ‘it is permitted.’ In other words, *exousia* is the "sovereign freedom" of

one who acts without hindrance. Jesus' teaching in sovereign freedom is contrasted with the teaching of the scribes. The difference is that the scribes' teaching authority depends on their knowledge of and adherence to tradition--especially the traditional interpretation of the Torah. However, Jesus teaches with an independent authority--or rather, on the authority of God. Whereas the scribes are bound to tradition, Jesus is relatively free--free in the way that only one who lives directly from and to God's authority is free.”

We are free, because we are followers of Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath.

We are also free because Jesus saves. “Pikuach Nefesh” means “Saving a Life.” The preservation of human life takes precedence over all the other commandments of Judaism. Jesus fulfilled all the laws and prophecies to be Messiah.

For what He has done for us...gives us even more reason to lay our Palm branches and our cloaks on the path before Jesus and to shout with even MORE vigor, “Hosanna!”

AND THAT IS THE MESSAGE!

