

Introduction: For twenty-two years I have preached traditional Palm Sunday sermons about how the crowd of Jews expected Jesus to come to Jerusalem, overthrow the Romans and establish Himself as the civic King, ruling Israel and the whole world with an 'iron scepter' (Psalm 2). Even His disciples, whom He told three times (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34!) He would be given over to be crucified and raised on the third day, had let this truth go in one ear and out the other. But, this is putting too much emphasis on frail human beings. *** This year, thanks to the Narrative Lectionary and the structure of the Gospel of John, we will focus on Jesus and the greatest act of LOVE in all history: His death on a Roman cross on Good Friday. I chose the Palm Sunday bulletin cover this year because it has a cross in the lower right corner. *** It is fitting that this year we focus on The Son of Man who was glorified in the 'hour' of His death (as a kernel of what falling to the ground and dying to produce many seeds, John 12:23-24). As Paul wrote, crucifixion is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to the nations, but to those God has called the cross is the power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:22-25). *** The chief priests said Jesus only claimed to be king, the soldiers gambled at the foot of the cross, and bystanders gave a poor dying man vinegar as He died; but, His human ancestor had sung His praises as The Savior who IS The King of Glory (Psalm 24). *** Our texts cover a lot of ground, so we will look at what the highlights say about Jesus and His sacrificial LOVE as The King of Glory.

I. Pilate gives Jesus over to be crucified with a sign 'King of the Jews'; when the chief priests object, Pilate asserts his words.
(John 19:16-22)

- A. Pilate gave Jesus over to the Place of the Skull and wrote a title for the cross: Jesus, King of the Jews. (Verses 16-19)
1. Then he gave over Him that He may be crucified; then they took Jesus. (Verse 16)
Give over: Rulers gave people over to be punished, and a peer delivered to punishment is a betrayal.
 2. Having borne the cross Himself, He went out to place being called Skull – which in Hebrew: Golgotha (gūl-gō-lēth). (Verse 17)
Bore His Cross: After the blood raising scourging, Jesus bore the weight of a heavy wooden cross.
 3. There they crucified Him with two others, but in middle: Jesus. (Verse 18)
Two others: All the gospels report Jesus crucified between two criminals (Isaiah 53:12). Luke tells us one asked to be remembered when Jesus entered His Kingdom, and heard Jesus say, 'Today with Me thou will be in Paradise' (Luke 23:39-43).
 4. Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross: Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews. (Verse 19)
Pilate's writing: Consistent with his time with Jesus before this, Pilate inscribed a 'title' attached to the top of the cross over Jesus' head.
- B. Many read the title and the chief priests wanted Pilate to change it, and he answered: what I have written, I have written. (Verses 20-22)
1. Then this title many of the Jews read, because where Jesus was crucified had been near the city, and it had been written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. (Verse 20)
Many read: At Passover, there were some fifty thousand people in Jerusalem, Jews from all over the Roman Empire. By posting his words about Jesus in the two universal languages, Pilate guaranteed that all who could read would know who Jesus is.
 2. The chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Thou must not write: King of the Jews; but: This one said, king I am of the Jews'. (Verse 21)
Chief priests complain: This is not a mild complaint. They were adamant that 'this one' (a derogatory term) should NOT be acknowledged as the Anointed One from the line of king David. This shows *not everyone sees the crucified Jesus as King*.
 3. Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written! (Verse 22)
Strong affirmation: In vernacular, Pilate is saying, in your face! and, pound sand! He is convinced Jesus IS the King of the Jews and they are wrong. May we be careful not to deny the absolute lordship of King Jesus over our lives, and guard against any subtle denial of His absolute sovereignty over us!

II. Soldiers crucifying Jesus divide His clothes, He asks John to care for His mother, He drinks vinegar and declares 'It has been finished'; He is The King of Glory. (John 19:23-30; Psalm 24)

- A. The soldiers crucifying Jesus divide up His clothes, casting lots for the seamless undergarment, fulfilling Psalm 22. (John 19:23-24)
1. When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took His clothes and made four parts, one for each soldier and the undergarment, but the undergarment was without one seam – woven from above entire. (Verse 23)
Four soldiers: The four soldiers could evenly divide up Jesus' outer garments.
Undergarment: However, His undergarment was 'left over' and it was indivisible!
 2. Therefore, they decided they should not split it, but to cast lots for it that Scripture might be fulfilled: They divided my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots. (Verse 24)
Lots: A Proverb says when men are playing a 'game of chance', God is in control: In the hollow will be hurled the lot and from Yahweh the whole of the judgment (Proverbs 16:33); and Solomon taught: Under the sun, the race is not to the swift ... time and chance will happen to all (Ecclesiastes 9:11).
Psalm 22: John was led to quote Psalm 22 (verse 18), and say this is what the soldiers did. To them this was just another man being crucified, and another opportunity for them to enrich themselves.
May we never seek to gain any personal advantage from our great and glorious King who LOVES us.

Not everyone sees the crucified Jesus as King

- B. Women and John were at the foot of the cross, Jesus gives His mother to John, who takes her as his own. (John 19:25-27)
1. These had stood beside the cross: His mother, His mother's sister, Mary wife of Cleopas (my exchange), and Mary Magdalene (tower). (Verse 25)

- Four women:** These four women continued to stand beside Jesus, in contrast to the soldiers gambling on the grimy ground.
- Jesus having seen His mother and the disciple, who had stood, whom He was loving, is saying to His mother: Woman! Behold thy son; He is saying to the disciple: Behold thy mother. (*Verses 26-27a*)
- Mary and John:** Jesus saw His mother and beloved disciple and He already had a plan.
- Jesus provides for mother:** Calling His mother 'woman', He tells her John is to be her son who will now provide for her, and John must now care for his new mother.

- From that 'hour' the disciple took her into the own (of him). (*Verse 27b*)

John accepts: Immediately, John took care of Jesus' mother as if she was his own.

- C. As His work comes to completion, Jesus says He thirsts, they give Him vinegar and He says, 'It has been finished!' (*John 19:28-30*)

- After this, Jesus had known that now all things had been completed, that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He is saying: I am thirsting. (*Verse 28*)

All completed: Jesus has been suffering for all the sins of all people for all time, and He has provided for His mother. He has accomplished what is needed for salvation.

Thirst: But, there is one more Scripture to fulfill concerning His crucifixion.

- A vessel full of vinegar, having been laid, then a sponge full of vinegar, hyssop having been put around, they offered it to His mouth. (*Verse 29*)

Psalms 69: Psalm 69 (verse 21b) says: Then they gave me food, bitter herbs; and, for my thirst they will give me vinegar. This is the Scripture that those at the cross fulfilled concerning Jesus.

Sympathy: At the moment of His death, Jesus looked nothing like a king. They treated Jesus with common human sympathy, but did not see Him as a king.

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- Therefore, when He received the vinegar, Jesus said: It has been finished; and, having bowed His head, He gave over the spirit. (*Verse 30*)

Spirit: Since Jesus is fully man and fully God, it makes sense that He gave over both His human spirit and the Holy Spirit He received at His baptism (Mark 1:11). Let us be filled with grateful awe for The LOVE Jesus showed as He died for our sins on the cross. And, His Resurrection put the exclamation point on what He did on the cross.

- D. The Creator owns all He created, purifies those He saved to give them a blessing as The King of Glory. (*Psalms 24*)

- To Yahweh the earth and the fullness of it / the world and those dwelling in it // because He upon the seas has founded it / and upon the rivers He has established it. (*Verses 1-2*)

God owns: Since God is the Creator of everything, He owns everything including animals and people.

- Who will ascend on the hill of Yahweh? / And who will stand up in His holy place? // Clean hands and pure heart / who has not lifted up to vanity his soul / and has not sworn deceitfully // He will take away blessing from Yahweh / and righteousness from the God of his salvation. (*Verses 3-5*)

Pure: People must be pure in actions and heart to come to God. Purity has been provided by faith in what Jesus did when He died for sins on the cross.

Salvation: God has always given salvation by grace through faith: first faith in His prophecies, now faith in what the Gospels and New Testament say about Jesus.

Blessing: These two result in righteousness being formed in those Jesus saved. And the end result is blessing from the Three-IN-One Covenant God.

Clean hands and a pure heart are blessed by God

- This generation of those seeking Him / seeking thy face (God of) Jacob. Selah. (*Verse 6*)

Seek: Yahweh said all who seek Him with all their heart will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13).

- Y'all must lift up, gates your heads / and y'all must be lifted up doors of eternity / and He will come in, The King of Glory. (*Verse 7*)

Lift up: Both gates and doors are commanded to open up and then The King of Glory will come in!

- Who (is) this The King of Glory? / Yahweh strong and mighty / Yahweh mighty in battle. (*Verse 8*)

Yahweh: Yahweh is declared strong and mighty, especially strong in battle. There is always a spiritual battle raging.

We must pray to The Covenant God that He will conquer the evil that is around us, whether now or after we leave this earth.

- Y'all must lift up, gates your heads / and y'all must lift up doors of eternity / and He will come in, The King of Glory. (*Verse 9*)

Repeat: The only difference here is the doors of eternity are commanded to lift up actively – in their own strength, rather than to be lifted up by God.

- Who (is) this The King of Glory? / Yahweh of hosts / He (is) The King of Glory. (*Verse 10*)

Hosts: Yahweh of hosts is plural and suggests The Trinity. With David's strong final declaration, he strongly challenges the three groups of people at the cross when Jesus died who were blind to the truth that He is The King of Glory!

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Conclusion: As Pilate gave over Jesus, King of the Jews, to be crucified, the chief priests called Him an imposter and soldiers greedily gambled over His clothes. Four women and John stood by faithfully while Jesus entrusted His mother to John. Finally bystanders gave Jesus vinegar as He cried out 'It has been finished' and The King of Glory gave over the spirit.

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