



ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

11856 MAYS CHAPEL RD., TIMONIUM, MD 21093

Palm Sunday March 20th, 2016

**✠ In The Name of The Father and of The Son
And of The Holy Ghost. Amen. ✠**

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Can you imagine the scene on this day two thousand years ago, outside of the gates of Jerusalem? It must have been pandemonium. Hundreds, thousands of people cheering Jesus as He rode into town on the back of an ass. People tearing branches from the trees, tearing off clothes to lay down on the ground in front of Him, hailing Him as their Savior. Finally, it would seem, Jesus is getting the credit He deserves.

So what happens next? Less than a week later, people are calling for Him to be crucified. You would think that all the cheering and adoring fans of this day would have stepped up to defend Him. You would think that there would be riots between those two factions with such different views on this guy Jesus. You would, however, be wrong. Where in the world had all of these adoring fans gone? Why didn't they put a stop to this injustice being done to Christ? It is that they are crying for His blood.

You see, with all of the adjectives we, and they, use for Christ: Powerful, Almighty, Omnipotent, Miraculous, Loving, Kind (the list goes on and on). One tends to go missing, it is "misunderstood".

When Christ entered into Jerusalem on this day two thousand years ago, the Jews rightly considered Him their Savior, but they

misunderstood how. They thought that finally had the king they needed, the warrior king. They thought that the years of of Roman oppression they had endured was over. They thought Christ would muster an army that would overthrow the Romans and free the Jews. What they did NOT realize was that Christ was there to free them, but not from the Romans, but from sin and death. They had misunderstood.

Now it should come as no surprise that this happened. After all, Christ had been, and is still, misunderstood from birth. Herod thought this boy king was come to take his power. Herod did not understand that Christ already had it. Jesus had ALL power. In last week's Gospel, we saw how Mary and Martha, and even His own disciples, did not understand him. When Jesus says that Lazarus sleeps, the Disciples said, "Oh, well that is okay. He will get better." Martha and Mary said, "If you had been here this would not have happened." They loved Christ, much as we do, but they could not grasp the awesome power He had. Just another of those pesky misunderstandings.

Now in Jerusalem this week two thousand years ago, the Scribes and Pharisees are just far too eager to take the cheering throngs and point out to them that this Christ had disappointed them. Something like, "See? We told you this would happen!" This is when the tide turns and the people who cried with joy and threw their

garments to the ground began calling “Crucify Him!”

This is a good news-bad news story. First the bad news: We. Are. They! Our lives are very much a synopsis of Holy Week. We are always eager to praise God with Hosannas and Hallelujahs when we pray, or do not pray and things are going our way. If we pray for someone’s recovery and our prayers are answered in the way we feel appropriate, we jump up and down. If we pray that God helps us in a time of need and He saves our bacon we let the bells peal and the hallelujahs flow. But when we pray, or not, for the recovery of a sick person, and the person dies, our reaction is, “God did not answer my prayer!” or “Where are you, God?” It is WE who cry out “Eli! Eli! Lama Sabacthani?” (“My God, my God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?”) God, you see, answers all prayers. God sees all, and knows all. Sometimes God’s answer is “No”.

We must accept that God knows what is best for us, and for the whole world. We must have faith in His love for us. We must accept this in both good times and bad, in the rain and in the sun, in living and in dying. It is in THIS way that we may truly call ourselves His.

Now let me try to give you the good news: While we may be tempted to question God, while we may be tempted to turn from Him, while we are the ones crying “Crucify Him!”, He loves us anyway. He knows our pains, our failings, our needs. He knows that we will lose our way on the road with Him, and yet He is there. To love and comfort us unconditionally. Anyway.

The same hands that we helped nail to the cross are the hands that reach out to you, to me, to the word in timeless, eternal, and unimaginable love.

“For God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son, that whosoever should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Amen.