



ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

11856 MAYS CHAPEL RD., TIMONIUM, MD 21093

Sunday March 27, 2016 - Palm Sunday

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

“The chief priests, mocking Him, with the scribes and elders said, ‘He saved others, Himself he cannot save. Let Him come down Now from the Cross and we will believe Him. He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now.’”

St. Matthew 27:41-43

We start the day with Jesus be elevated and hailed as the Messiah, the political and earthly ruler the Jews hoped would come. As we near the end of the Gospel the chief priests taunt Jesus, daring Him to save His own life from the Cross. Worldly eyes do not see what is plainly before us in the Spirit. The Messiah has come to serve and save, not rule and kill. The Cross is where Jesus gives His life for us, not a place where He would save it for His own Glory.

We look around and the world seems unjust. Good people, loving people, people of God, who trust in God find themselves in difficult straits and hard times. Their hearts are broken, their families are under duress, people they love face illness and death. The world looks at those people, and it seems as if their faith has brought them no comfort. The world echoes the refrain of the chief priests, scribes and elders, “they trusted in God, let Him deliver them now.”

To the world delivery is relief and release from pain, and heartache and the difficulties of life. It is an enigma to the world that we can have faith in a God that would allow us to experience hardship and death. As it says in the psalm, “Eyes they have, but do not see.” To a Christian, delivery in this world is not the

end of grief, and heartache and turmoil, it is the grace to face those difficulties in faith and with the peace that passes all understanding. Delivery is the sure knowledge that our difficulties aren't eliminated, but in fact they are transformed into a sacrifice, a gift to God, and that our gift will be accepted, blessed and returned in glory.

Jesus is subjected to humiliation, injustice, pain and death. God delivers Him from these circumstances by transforming the death of this one man into Life for all men. His indignity becomes glory. The life He gave, pouring out His life for us until the very last drop of blood was delivered to the spear of the Centurion, became salvation for each of us, and the eternal life to which we aspire.

The priests call out to Jesus to save Himself, and so prove His identity. But Jesus had already told them that it was by spending His life in obedience and love that He would prove His identity and in the process save the world.

In the 12th Chapter of St. John, Jesus speaks to this truth. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor."

"Let Him follow me." If we want to serve Christ, we have to follow Him to the Cross. We place our troubles and pain and fears on the Cross with Him, offering them up with Him to be transformed in a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

There is nothing in this life that is worth saving. Everything that we think is good is still temporal and imperfect. They are only shadows and whispers of the glory that is reserved for us if we serve the Son. Relationships, health, and life are all transformed and perfected when we follow His example, and stop trying to save our lives and the material things in our lives, but determine to spend those lives, to the last talent, to the last resource, to the last indignity, and even to the last drop of blood, in praise and thanksgiving and faith, following our Lord through the Cross, and into heaven. In the blessed Holy Week that is upon us, let us prayerfully consider what it is we are desperate to save, unwilling to sacrifice, and then let us determine how we can change from saving our lives to spending the lives that the Lord has given us, just as His Son spent His life for our salvation.

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