

Stretching Toward Sunday

Thoughts, readings and reflections
based on this week's lectionary readings

March 29, 2015
Palm and Passion Sunday, Year B

The readings this week:

- Isaiah 50:4-9a ◦ Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
- Philippians 2:5-11- ◦ Mark 11:1-11



[Click here to read the Palm Sunday Scriptures](#)

[Click here to read the Passion Sunday Scriptures](#)

Blessed is the One

Lately I have found myself thinking about procession and pilgrimage: how we move with mindfulness across a landscape that transforms us along the way; what propels us to set off down paths made sacred by those who have traveled before us; which roads draw us closer to God, and which ones draw us farther away from being aware of God's presence.

There are times for venturing down a holy path that has physical substance, giving ourselves to traveling a real road that will alter us in ways we cannot predict. And then there are times for committing ourselves to a way that will not take us far in terms of physical distance but will draw us down interior pathways we have not explored before. The desert mothers and fathers of the early church well knew this latter journey. They often counseled staying put, wanting to make sure that physical travel wasn't being treated as a substitute for interior work rather than an aid to it. Reflecting on this in her book *The Forgotten Desert Mothers*, Laura Swan writes, "The desert journey is one inch long and many miles deep."

The road that Jesus traveled to Jerusalem in order to make his entrance that we celebrate on Palm Sunday was not terribly long in terms of physical distance. Yet it was miles deep, marked by years of preparation and prayer, discernment and courage as Jesus traveled farther into the fullness of who he was meant to become.

And what road do we travel to meet the Christ who comes toward us on that ancient way of procession and pilgrimage? What journey do we need to take, by inches and miles, in order to welcome him?

"My life's work," my Franciscan friend Father Carl

once said, "is to go on a pilgrimage to who I am." This week and beyond, may we make that pilgrimage.

Blessing for Palm Sunday

*Blessed is the one
who comes to us
by the way of love
poured out with abandon.*

*Blessed is the one
who walks toward us
by the way of grace
that holds us fast.*

*Blessed is the one
who calls us to follow
in the way of blessing,
in the path of joy.*

[The Painted Prayerbook](#), Jan Richardson



Photo Credit: Eduardo Aguirre

Reflecting on the Word



___ 1st Reading: [Isaiah 50:4-9a](#)

Who does Isaiah seem to speak about in our passage? In what way is he open to the Lord? How eager are you to learn? What is your motivation to learn? A good position, a wife, money, status, image? Who has the Lord laid on your heart to reach? What do you need to effectively reach out to these people? Does the Lord wake you up? What does this mean? Are your first thoughts of each day on what the Lord has for you? How close is your relationship to God your Father? What is the difference between hearing and listening? Do you hear God? Do you listen? How important is it for you to meet God and do His will each day? [JesusWalk.com](#), [Biblical Foundations](#)

___ Psalm Reading: [Psalm 118:1-2, 12-29](#)

The early church applied verse 22 to Jesus. How is Jesus like this stone-turned-capstone? For what events in your life are you particularly grateful to God? How did God prove to be your helper, your strength or your salvation? [Quiet Time Bible Study](#), [InterVarsity Press](#)



I was unprepared, and undeserving, and stupid. But there is a cross over the whole world, and you can see everything through it. See the crowds, see the disciples, see Jesus: riding the donkey into Jerusalem, eating supper with friends, stumbling up the hill. And if you let your mind be made in the mind of Christ Jesus, you will stay beside him the whole way, because you see where all this is going.

It is going toward love. It is going toward life. And it cannot be stopped.

From [The Edge of the World](#), by Sara Miles

Praying Toward Sunday

Lord, we commit ourselves to follow Christ, not only on days that feel like Palm Sunday, but when he calls us to follow to Calvary. We commit ourselves to follow him always and only and forever. Amen.

David Clowes

Christ's entry into Jerusalem,
Norman Adams



___ 3rd Reading: [Philippians 2:5-11](#)

What does Paul tell us about who Jesus is and what Jesus chose to do? Have you ever considered that Jesus could have come as a “demanding king” instead of as a “humble servant”? How would your response to Him be different if that was how he came? In our relationships with one another, how can we have the attitude of Christ? Does having the attitude of Christ mean that we think less of ourselves? Does having the attitude of Christ revolve around our ability to choose to let go of what is rightfully ours? What might happen if Christians stopped demanding their rights and started obeying God’s will not matter what? What might happen if we chose to have the attitude of Christ in all of our relationships? How can the attitude of Christ be developed in us each day? What prevents us from having His attitude? What aspects of Jesus’ attitude would you like to work on this week? [Eagle Christian Church](#)

___ 4th Reading: [Mark 11:1-11](#)

The people praise Jesus as their king and savior, but later they will kill him. Is Jesus the kind of king they expected? Why or Why not? Do we sometimes have expectations of God that he does not fulfill? How do we respond when God does not do what we expect? How can we demonstrate trust in God even when he does not do what we expect him to do? Can we glorify God even when our personal expectations are not met? [The Church at Brook Hills](#)