

Sermon: March 28, 2010  
“The Palm Sunday parade”

Where will your “Palm Sunday” parade take you tomorrow? ----- to a job you’re not sure will be there two weeks from now? ... to dialysis or chemo or another round of re-hab? ... back to school after spring break, where you don’t feel like you fit in? ...

Are you following your dream? ... doing something different than you ever thought possible?  
By the way ... HOW IS OUR LIFE? Joy? ... excitement? ... worried? ... tired? ... frustrated?

I think of Jesus this morning ... coming into Jerusalem on a donkey. He knows: TIME IS SHORT.  
Palm Sunday is about expectations. We all have them.

For Jesus ... well, his followers want a king. They want results. They want a new kingdom ... where they will have positions of power. They expect a messiah and savior.

And what do they get?

*A humble carpenter, who holds hands with lepers ... eats with sinners ... loves the poor ... sticks up for prostitutes ... and wants to make religion less complicated.*

Shouts of “alleluia” ... putting their cloaks on the ground ... waving palm branches ... and when the parade is over ... Jesus goes up on a hill ... he looks over the city he loves ... and he weeps.

Why? ... because he knows they don’t understand.

The few who seem to understand what Jesus is all about ... they aren’t even the “religious ones.”  
Not much has changed today.

We live in a world of “EXPECTATIONS.”

For ourselves ... our kids ... for our minister and presidents ... our teachers and accountant ... from little league games to traveling soccer teams ... bands and cheerleaders and special education ... From the disabled adult who comes here for picnics during the summer ... to the darling of the magnet school who can go to the college of her choice ----- EXPECTATIONS ABOUND.

Often they are too high ... sometimes too low ... all the time --- there are way too many!!

Think of where you are now in life. Are you surprised by where you are?

\*\*On the one hand ... some of you may be pinching yourselves ... amazed by your good fortune and the people surrounding you.

\*\*On the other hand ----- maybe you are wondering: I never would have believed that I’m enduring the hardships I’m going through ... the struggles, the pain ...

As I get older ... the more I realize:

*life is about seizing the moment ... grasping the moment ... and using the time we have.*

Life is a parade ----- hosannas, alleluias, amens, laughter, tears, joy, pain, success, disappointment ...  
hey, it’s all here!!

You want to find Jesus? ----- he’s in the middle of all this.

You want to find God? ----- he’s in the middle of your parade.

You want to find religion? ----- look inside your soul, look at life, look inside the journey.  
RELIGION IS LIFE ... LIFE IS RELIGION.

When we come up here to the altar ... to receive gifts of bread and wine ...

Oh, by the way ... I heard one of our newer members ask one of you: “On what Sundays of the month do we actually have Communion?” To which you said: “Well, it’s pretty much whenever Don feels like it!@!! .... and lately he feels like it most every Sunday!!”

Anyway ---- when we come up to the altar ... when you walk in the door on Sunday morning ... we sing, we pray, we reflect ----- all we really have is our shared humanity.

The “gunk” we’ve been through the day before ... whatever baggage we carry with us ... our sins, our victories,

our fragile-human moments ----- we truck up here to the altar and lay everything at  
the feet of our Lord.

It's good.

It's cleansing.

And ... at least for a few moments ... our expectations or lack-thereof have no power ...  
"it's just you and me, Lord."

I realize more and more ... maybe you do, too ...

*Being angry all the time is nuts.*

*Fighting and pulling others down ...it's detrimental to our health.*

*Yelling and screaming and not listening ----- it just turns us into someone God doesn't want us to be.*

*Being self-righteous and always having to be "right" ... makes us less that we can be.*

It's time to come together.

Peace, understanding, living with hope in the midst of all the expectations around us ----- it doesn't start "out  
there" with someone else ..... it's starts inside the "heart-song" of each one of us.

Do you learn much about life from our "animal friends"????

Jude, Q, and I went to visit my bro' and his wife and family this past week. The live in Virginia ... where the  
fastest growing religion is NASCAR.

Took a ride in my pick-up truck to a wild-life refuge. In the mountains ... acres and acres filled with all kinds  
of God's amazing creatures: llamas, zebras, deer, buffalo, ostriches ... some animals that God may not even  
have invented yet!@!! You drive up to the gate ... you can buy buckets of food. Q, Jude, and my brother's  
wife Nannette are in the back of the truck ... Jim and I in the cab, with the windows open.

This huge camel comes walking up to us ... sticks his head in the window ... and plunges into my bucket: the  
food goes in his mouth and all over my floor. In the back the ostriches are all over Q ... they are eating, Q is  
laughing with his whole body. Everyone is having fun ... and I swear: even the buffalo were smiling.

Two hours later I'm at the car wash ----- vacuuming food off the floor and wiping moose-drool off the  
dashboard. My truck is a mess ... but I can still feel the love and hear the laughter.

Actually ... my truck reminds me of Palm Sunday: a mixture of chaos and mis-placed expectations,  
goofs of all shapes and sizes, living at peace in the natural beauty God gives us.

You know? ----- if these animals can do it, *I can ... you can ... all of us can.*

Safety and peace ... in the midst of chaos ... a dream, a vision ... all part of our shared journey.

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