

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen

These words taken from our Gospel reading read to you a few minutes ago, from the Book of Matthew, chapter 21, specifically verses 8 through 11, they form the basis for our meditation this morning.

- The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed Him shouted.....
- Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
- Hosanna in the highest heaven.
- When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked who is this?
- The crowd answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Dear members of Hope, dear fellow redeemed in Christ.....

- Behold your King has come!!!
- He has entered Jerusalem, the holy city.
- It is the time for the Passover Festival.

It is a time of joy and celebration.

- Your King is fulfilling the will of His Father.
- The prophecies made of all those before Him have been fulfilled.
- Your salvation has come!

The Passover Lamb is to be sacrificed.

- And this Passover Lamb is your King.
- The Lamb who takes away the sin of the world has arrived to do just that.

What a grand and glorious day this is.

- What a week lies ahead for the Paschal Lamb.
- What a week lies ahead for you and me.

All of history, all of life culminates, converges, comes together and has meaning and takes shape in this one week.

- This coming week is the center point of history, the world, and the hopes of all mankind.....
- And especially you and me.
- Everything before us converges on this week and everything after us diverges from this week.

In this week, amongst many other things, Jesus will.....

- Cleanse the Temple.
- Overturning the tables of the money changers to turn the temple back from a den of robbers to a house of prayer.

He will go up to the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem and lament for us.

- O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.
- How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing.
- And then Jesus once again predicts His second coming, which we continue to look forward to.

In the Upper Room He will institute the Lord's Supper.

- Take Eat, this is My body. Take drink, this is My blood shed for you for the remission of all your sins.
- Do this often in remembrance of Me.
- In a few minutes we will again do just that.

He prayed and was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.

- "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here and watch with Me." Words to His disciples and to you and me.
- And a short time later when they came to arrest Him.....
- Have you come out against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture Me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

That night and early morning He would stand 6 mock trials.

- Yes, six.
- Before Annas.
- Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin.
- Before the Sanhedrin again.
- Before Pilate.
- Before Herod.
- And again before Pilate.
- And in the midst of all this He would see His disciples desert Him, deny Him, and betray Him

He was brutally beaten.....

- Many times the severity of this resulted in death for the victim.

He would hear the shouts of, “CRUCIFY HIM.”

- And He would hear Pilate announce the sentence of crucifixion upon Him.
- Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. Pilate said to the Jews, “Behold your King.”
- They cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him.”
- Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?”
- The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”
- So he delivered Him over to them to be crucified.

He would carry His cross, which was our cross to Calvary.

- Along the way He would hear the jeers of the people.

He would be stripped of His clothing, nailed to the cross and hung there for 6 hours for all to see and wag their heads and make fun of Him.....

- While He struggled for every breath He drew, with great pain and sorrow. All our sins heaped upon His shoulders.

Words spoken from the cross.....

- “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”
- “Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise.”
- “Woman behold thy son. Behold thy mother.”
- “My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?”
- “I thirst.”

And He would die.

- “It is finished.”
- “Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”
- And His side would be pierced with a spear to make sure of His death.
- And He would be laid in a grave.

And on the third day be raised from the dead as our victorious King.

- The angel would say, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?”

- That is what all lies ahead this week.

We are on the crossroads of history and salvation.

- It is so important.
- You are here. You are again at that point. Will you be a part of it?

Today we stand at the entrance to Jerusalem, along the road as our King come.

- Our King who knows what lies ahead but willingly goes.

Jesus is on the road heading into Jerusalem.

- But there was a long road traveled for Him to get to this point.
- And I don't just mean from Galilee.

Turn the clock back to Old Testament times.

- Let me highlight a few key stops, points of interest along the way.
- There was the promise of this Savior way back in the Garden of Eden when man fell into sin.
- There was the wickedness of all mankind and the great flood.....but the saving of Noah and his family, 8 souls in all.
- There was the calling of Abraham and the promise of, and his traveling to the Promised Land.
- There was Jacob and the 12 tribes of Israel including Joseph in Egypt and Judah from which Jesus would be a descendant.
- There was Moses and the exodus from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea.

There was Joshua and the conquest of the Promised Land.

- There was all the great prophets including Isaiah, Elijah and Elisha.
- There was the captivity in Babylon and later release and return to Israel.
- And there were many other events that led us to this Jesus this day and His triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

And by the grace of God and all those that have gone before you, you are here. You have been brought to this place.

- And again I ask, will you participate in all these events that will again take place this week?

Well.....as there is a road into Jerusalem and all they key events that took place there, there is also a road that will lead out of Jerusalem.

- Everything from before has caused the convergence on Jerusalem.
- And from the events of this coming week, there is a divergence from Jerusalem.
- And so I ask you not only if you will participate in the events of this coming week, will you take the road of our Lord that will lead from here?

This Jesus did rise from the dead and He did make 9 recorded post resurrection appearances as recorded in the Bible.

- And He ascended into heaven to prepare a place for you.
- And He will return.
- Where will He find you and what spiritual condition will you be in?

Where you are right now has been established.

- By the grace of God those that have gone before us has brought us to this point.
- And the events of this week will give you the power and strength and confidence to then move forward.
- But will you go on and follow our Lord?
- It is a long and winding road that lies ahead.

You do have choices to make.

- You can say the journey is too long. More than I care to do.
- You can say the journey is too hard. There will be mountains to climb. There will be battles to be had.
- You can say what is at the end of the journey is not worth it.
- It is not real.
- It is not that good.
- I'll just stay here and take my chances.

Or you can continue the journey. You can follow our Lord.

- If you really do follow the activities of this upcoming week.....that are so critical/pivotal to all of this.....you will see some things.
- This week is the center point of history, the world, and the hopes of all mankind.
- You will see Jesus' enormous love for you.
- You will see His power, His might, His victory over sin, death, and the devil.

He did this all for you.

- Just as He will also stay with you on that journey.
- And He will help you, He will carry you, and He will make sure of your salvation.

Today we stand at the entrance to Holy Week.

- We wave the palms. A sign of homage and victory to our King.
- We cry out, Hosanna, Lord save us.
- And He will and He does just that.

Please, I ask you to join me in walking with our Lord this Passion Week.

- And I ask you then to also join me as we continue to follow our Savior to all eternity.
- It will be greater than you and I can imagine and it will last for all eternity.

I close this message by reading to you again the Scripture that we opened it with.

- I trust that it perhaps will allow for more reflection and perspective than when we started.
- The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed Him shouted.....
- Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
- Hosanna in the highest heaven.
- When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked who is this?

The events of the past has gotten us to this point.

- The events of this coming week will give you the power and the strength and confidence to continue on.

The whole city was stirred and asked who this is that has entered Jerusalem.

- The crowd answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."
- And to that we add, our Lord and our Savior and our salvation.
- Amen.

(Please remain seated) And now, may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

At this time we will have the rite of confirmation for Jesse Masters. I invite Jesse and Phil and Debbie to come forward.