

# Scripture Readings and Sermon

*April 14, 2019 by Rev. Mark Brechin*

## **Commentary on Philippians 2:5–11** (*Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#)*)

This early hymn of the church also served as an early statement of faith. Christians profess that Jesus is fully divine and fully human. This claim of Jesus' full divinity means that Jesus was not created by God but was through the Trinity in fact God. As Philippians says he was in the "form of God" and equal with God. And yet, in the midst of his full divinity, Jesus was also fully human "in human form" and subject to a human death. This is the mystery of the "incarnation" where we claim that God is with us in Jesus. God experienced the extent of human suffering on the cross. God who is infinite experienced mortal suffering in Jesus. Once God was done with this human form, God did not discard the humanity of Jesus but raised the human form to heaven in the mystery of the "ascension". The woundedness of humanity in the marks of the nails is now part of God in Jesus. It is through Jesus' humanity that all of humanity may enter into God's glory. This is why the name of Jesus is so revered. Not because the name has power but because the who is named has opened the gates of heaven through his life, death, and resurrection. This sacrificial act is remembered during Passion week.

## **Commentary on Luke 19:28-40** (*Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#)*)

Much of Luke's telling of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem is the same as Matthew and Mark. What is unique to Luke is the absence of palm branches, the words the people use, and the conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees. There is very little said about the absence of palm branches by scholars. One rabbinical source states that the waving of palm branches is a way of glorifying God since the sound of the wind through branches pronounces the divine name. The people in Luke, however, do not use such a subtle method. They clearly proclaim "glory in the highest heaven." The praise of the people points to the very thing that Jesus will be accused of - being the King of the Jews. In the other gospels, the people cry out Hosanna or "Save us!" to the "Son of David". This could have a political meaning or it could refer to Jesus' reputation for various miracles of healing. It is also argued that this phrase was common leading up to Passover which is a remembrance of God's saving the people from slavery in Egypt. Luke's version, however, makes it clear that Jesus is being welcomed as a king. The people then repeat the same words used by the angels at Jesus' birth, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" This may explain Jesus' response to the Pharisees. The people, the host of angels, and even creation proclaim Jesus' Lordship.

## **Commentary on Luke 22:14-18, 31-32, 35-38, 50-53** (*Youtube [Lectionary Study Video](#)*)

The story of Jesus' last night in Luke 22:14-62 is very similar to Matthew and Mark with a few exceptions which will now be explored. In verses 15-18, Jesus speaks about his upcoming execution by saying that he will not eat or drink again until the "kingdom of God" comes. It is important to remember that the Passover ceremony has several cups which have their own unique significance as well as different uses of the bread. The first cup which is referenced in this section is the Cup of Sanctification used to consecrate the ceremony. The third cup is the Cup of Redemption which is the cup of the New Covenant. After the questions are asked at the beginning of the meal, the bread is broken and part is kept til the end of the meal to be "ransomed". It is this first part of the bread that Jesus shares in Luke and the "ransom" is the part used at the end of the meal to symbolize Jesus body. The next section (31-38) focuses on Jesus preparing the disciples for his arrest. He knows that they will be confused and will leave him which makes his statement to Peter in 32 even more meaningful. Even know they will desert him, Jesus tells Peter to "strengthen your brothers" like a parent telling the

oldest child to "look out for the family". Knowing that they will be helpless without him, Jesus even tells them to buy weapons to defend themselves. In verse 51 after they have cut off the ear of a slave, Luke has Jesus healing the wound. The weapons are not meant to be offensive but only for defense. The need for defense is pointed out in verse 53 where Luke records Jesus as saying "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!" This is why they need protection and this is why they need sandals and purses. The only way for Jesus to die is for darkness to have a moment of power. And yet, when the full power of darkness is revealed, it is love that wins!

### **Sermon Summary** (*Youtube [Sermon Video](#)*)

The story of passion week is second only to Christmas as the most known story of Jesus. And yet, each of the gospel writers add their own unique perspective on that last week of Jesus. In the Gospel of John, Jesus washes the disciples feet as a demonstration of servanthood. In the reading from Luke, Jesus tells Simon Peter that being a servant means strengthening the other disciples when Jesus is gone. Jesus knows that Peter will deny him but this is not the same as losing faith. When Peter has found his strength after weeping over his denial, he must share that strength and hope with the others.

The disciples will need that strength when Judas betrays not only Jesus but their trust. It is a time of darkness, when Jesus willingly puts out his light so that people can walk by their own light. Before waiting for Jesus to answer their questions about the use of swords, the disciples in their fear attack a servant. Peter denies knowing Jesus in the courtyard. And finally, the "leaders" of the people will order the execution of Jesus. During this Holy Week, people stumble in the darkness and call it the "right thing to do". When we find ourselves in the dark, do we strengthen one another in hope and faith or do we add to the confusion? When the darkness seems to be in control, do we give in to fear or do we remember that at our darkest, Jesus' love was at its brightest? It is Holy Week and Good Friday is at the end of the Week but Easter is COMING!