BIBLE STUDY
March 18, 2024

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD
Isaiah 50: 4-7
Philippians 2: 6-11
Mark14:1-15:47

- Throughout the Passion story there are two levels: the plan of God being enacted by the will of God and the human agents bringing about the death of Jesus. Jesus dies because of the actions of sinful humanity, but God allows it to happen and will transform it into life-giving salvation for the world.
- Jesus instructions about the preparation for the Passover Supper shows that he enters consciously and deliberately into what is about to happen. Jesus is not a tragic hero helplessly driven to his death by fate. He freely chooses to embrace what will happen.
- At the last Supper, Jesus transforms the Passover Meal into the Christian Eucharist. The bread becomes his Body and the wine his Blood to bring about a union between him and his disciples.
- Jesus knowing all things predicts that the disciples will all abandon him. Peter protests that he will never abandon him, but Jesus predicts his denial before the cock crows twice.
- In the Agony in the Garden, Jesus, who has always appeared to be powerful and resolute, now collapses in fear and anxiety about his approaching death. The three disciples who witnessed his glory at the Transfiguration now see his agony. They are unable to remain vigilant and watchful as Jesus had exhorted all disciples to be before the end time. The spirit is strong, but the flesh is weak.
- Jesus is betrayed by Judas, one of his inner circle. And he is betrayed by a kiss.
- The young man who flees naked after losing his linen cloth symbolizes the disciples who abandon Jesus and deny their baptismal commitment.
- The two trials of Jesus revolve around a contrast between Jesus and two figures. During the Jewish trial, Jesus speaks honestly about his identity as Son of God while Peter denies three times his identity as one of Jesus' disciples. While before Pilate, Jesus, the innocent Son of the Father, is condemned while Bar-abbas ("son of the Father") the guilty revolutionary is let go free.
- Jesus, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the very Son of God, is whipped, mocked, slapped and spit upon.
- Simon of Cyrene, an African man, carries the cross of Jesus. He represents all disciples who carry their cross daily in union with Jesus. He denied himself (did what he did not want to do), accepted the cross, and followed Jesus. We are invited to identify with Simon.
- Jesus is crucified and as he hangs on the cross, he is mocked. Much of the mockery fulfills Psalm 22.

- The taunt of Jesus by the chief priests that he come down from the cross and save himself is in direct contradiction to Jesus' teaching that he came not to do his own will, but the will of the One who sent him.
- Jesus final words, My God, my God, why have you abandoned me is a quote from Psalm 22 which is a psalm that begins in despair but ends in hope and trust.
- The centurion speaks the truth, "truly this man was the Son of God.' A gentile sees Jesus' identity whereas the chief priests are blind.
- The women who had followed and supported Jesus during his ministry remained faithful and present to him until the end. The men abandoned him, but the women stayed by him.
- Joseph of Arimathea provides his own tomb for the Lord. The women who will visit the tomb on the morning of the resurrection see where Jesus is buried.