

Sermon Title: **“Who Betrays Whom?”**

Bible: **Luke 19:28-40 & Philippians 2:5-11**

When: on Palm Sunday in Lent, April 10th, 2022

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube live streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

### **Opening Prayer**

O Lord, on this Palm and Passion Sunday, we remember your entry into Jerusalem. We also remember your way to the cross, and death on the cross. Please help us to open our eyes to see your love on the cross. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

### **1. Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem**

“Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” Today is Palm Sunday! Jesus rode on a donkey, and entered Jerusalem, and the whole people welcomed Jesus and shouted out joyfully to praise God. It is Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. After a lot of miracles and signs, finally Jesus entered Jerusalem. Jesus fed five thousand people and more. Jesus walked on the water. Jesus calmed the storm. Jesus cast out demons. Jesus healed the sick. Jesus made the blind see. Jesus raised Lazarus to life after he had died. Jesus gave many different teachings. Jesus welcomed little children. Jesus forgave sinners and ate with them.

Now, Jesus entered Jerusalem. We know the reason, and what was coming next, which was the cross. This Palm Sunday is also called Passion Sunday. Passion means the suffering of

Jesus on the cross. But at that time, many people, and even Jesus' disciples could not understand this. They might think that Jesus was going to perform many other miracles in Jerusalem. They might think that Jesus was going to save them from the Roman Empire, as Moses saved the Israelites from Egypt. They might expect Jesus to be revealed as the real king of Israel, or the military general who was going to fight against the Empire and conquer it. Maybe, they expected Jesus to be that kind of Messiah. But who Jesus was and what Jesus did was totally different from what they expected.

## **2. Who Betrays Whom?**

Because Jesus was God, Jesus performed many miracles. Many people followed him. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, Jesus was more than welcome! However, Jesus betrayed them. What I mean is that Jesus betrayed people's thoughts, people's expectations. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was not for the victory, but for the cross. Jesus was a human being, just like us, who was vulnerable and broken. People started to leave Jesus, because they were not seeing miracles. Even the disciples could not follow Jesus, because they could not understand, and because they were afraid. Even though they lived together with Jesus for three years, they could not understand Jesus' way to the cross. Even though they eventually learned to enter the narrow gate, rather than the wide gate, at that time they did not know how to accept his way to the cross. As Jesus betrayed his disciples' expectations, the disciples betrayed Jesus. They deserted him. They denied him. The disciples betrayed Jesus. But who betrayed whom first?

### **3. Christ Hymn**

Chapter 2 of Philippians has a hymn for Christ. Verses 6 through 11 are widely regarded as a Christ hymn. We do not know how to read or how to sing this hymn. In my understanding, there are three verses or three parts. The first one is an incarnation. God is God, but God emptied Godself, and became a human being. What made God become a human being? The second one is a Crucifixion, the suffering and the death on the cross. Jesus humbled himself and died on the cross. What made God and Jesus suffer and die on the cross? The third one is God's exaltation. Jesus is the resurrected Christ. Christ is our Lord.

What do you think of this Christ hymn? If you were to write a hymn about Jesus Christ, what would you want to write down? Miracles? Joys? In this Christ hymn, there is no mention of the miracles. Emptying oneself and humbling oneself are the main themes. Can emptying and humbling be joyful? Very interestingly, Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians in prison, and one of the themes of this letter is joy. He said, "I will continue to rejoice," (Philippians 1:18) and "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4) And Paul said, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus."

### **4. Can we follow Jesus?**

In our faith journey, what do we expect? Do we expect miracles? Yes, Jesus can do it. Do we expect healing? Yes, Jesus can do it. Do we expect our prayers answered? Yes, Jesus will listen and answer. Then, how about emptying ourselves? How about humbling ourselves? How about serving others? How about loving our neighbors and enemies? How about

suffering? How about death? When Jesus betrays our expectations, can we follow Jesus? Can we follow Jesus, even when we cannot understand Jesus? Can we follow Jesus, even when Jesus shows us a different way that we do not expect? Can we follow Jesus, when there is suffering? Can we follow Jesus, when we are afraid? Can we follow Jesus, when there is a death?

Most of the apostles, who were the real witnesses of the many miracles with their own eyes and through their own lives, betrayed, deserted, and denied Jesus on his way to the cross. When Jesus betrays our expectations, it might cause us to betray Jesus, like the apostles. We have not even been able to see Jesus with our own eyes, as the apostles did. But as we know, Jesus arose. Jesus came to the apostles, not to punish them, but to love them, to forgive them, and to give peace. Likewise, Jesus comes to us to love us and to forgive us. When Jesus comes to us, we can follow Jesus, because Jesus loves us all the time. All the time: even when we betray Jesus, Jesus loves us. So, we can follow Jesus.

### **Closing Prayer**

Gracious God, you always love us. Even when we betray you, you do not desert us. You do not deny us. You always welcome us. You always love us. Please help us to open our doors and our minds to your love. In Jesus' name. Amen.