



# Palm Sunday

April 9, 2006

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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## The Silence of God

Today marks the beginning of Jesus' final week of earthly life. As Jesus stood before Pilate during his trial, as the powerful Roman ruler attempted to interrogate him, the gospels say that Jesus was silent. In our struggles with God, it is the silence that can put our relationship with God to the greatest test.

Mark 14:10-16

## For Personal Study

How strange a week, Holy Week.

It begins with triumph and the feeling that we can overcome all obstacles. We follow Jesus, who has healed us, taught us, and loved us. As we lay our palm branches down in His path to honor His entrance into Jerusalem, we celebrate. We feel the power of Him. In what ways can you extend the feeling of Jesus' triumphal entry into your life on a daily basis? How do the Monday's, Tuesday's, Wednesday's of our lives dull that feeling and leave us vulnerable to the next part of the Holy Week story?

Even in the midst of the triumph we read that Judas is planning a betrayal of Jesus. Judas shows us even a disciple can betray, for something as simple as material gain. Isn't Peter's denial of Christ three times also a type of betrayal? Mark's gospel makes a point of telling us about the shame of betrayal, either through a direct act or a denial of a relationship. Where is the bigger challenge for you in dealing with betrayal: material gain, or personal fear? What steps do you need to take to honor Jesus' love for you?

As the events of Holy Week progress, Jesus is accused by the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law. All kinds of accusations are hurled at Jesus, statements and testimony that didn't agree, but his accusers didn't stop trying. In the challenges of your life, in what ways do you accuse Jesus of not meeting your needs or not being what you are looking for? Society's accusations against religion and faith have become a team sport it seems. How can you protect yourself from being in the wrong crowd, the accusing crowd?

Daily we struggle with many different life issues. We are taught to bring everything to Jesus in prayer. But Jesus has a silent streak that we can find maddening, just as his silence in front of the Sanhedrin angered the high priests. Think of the silent responses you've received from your prayers to Jesus. What reasons can you imagine for that silence? How can you trust that God will respond in His time and in His way? What can you do while you wait for His answer?

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem soon fades, as humankind shows our sinful side in ways of

betrayal and denial. Our selfish expectations of the King of kings are not met in Jesus. This Holy Week spend time thinking about ways you can let His will be done, not yours.

## For Group Discussion

(study group, friendships, couples, family)

### Read Mark 12: 1-11.

We are given signs of God's love throughout our life. Why is it we sometimes reject His signs? What can you change about your life to help you better recognize God's signs of love for you?

### Read Mark 14: 27-31.

In a world that criticizes Christian belief, what can you do to actively stand by your relationship with Jesus Christ?

### Read Isaiah 50 4-9a.

He who vindicates you is near. How do you allow Jesus, your nearby vindicator, to protect you and keep you? Does it have to be on your terms? How can you let it be according to His will?