



Sermon for Mar 28, 2021, “Jesus Predicts His Death”

SCRIPTURE: Mark 11:1-10 ¹ When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ² and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’” ⁴ They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵ some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶ They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Introduction: Jesus' words on Passion and Resurrection

Today is Palm Sunday, which commemorates the moment when Jesus entered Jerusalem to take up the cross for us. People welcomed Jesus by shouting “**Hosanna! Hosanna!**” They expected Jesus as the one who would bring back the glory of Israel in the days of King David. But that expectation soon turned to disappointment. The way Jesus had to follow the will of God the Father and what people wanted were different.

People welcomed Jesus by shouting “**Hosanna! Hosanna!**”, but they did not understand the way Jesus was going to go, and they tried to fulfill their greed through Jesus.

As Christians, what are we expecting from Jesus? I hope you will reaffirm your Christian identity through today's text.

Today's text is what Jesus predicts to His disciples about His Passion and Resurrection. **Mark 8:31 says. "He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."**

But when Peter heard this, he rebukes Jesus. A great conflict arises between Jesus and Peter. However, even with Jesus' reaction, Peter did not back down. Jesus rebukes Peter and says. “**Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men**” (Mark 8:33)

After this, Jesus tells the disciples and the crowd "the way of the disciples." Let's look at **Mark 8:34. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."**

Jesus makes no compromises when it comes to discipleship. Jesus says. "For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38)

Body: The Three Commands of Jesus

In the Bible, the Twelve Apostles are called '**The Disciples**'. However, the Twelve Apostles are not the only disciples of Jesus. The Bible says that everyone who is taught by Jesus and who follows the life Jesus lived is a disciple.



The word **'disciple'**, used in the Four Gospels and Acts 230 times, is mostly replaced by the names **'Christians and saints'** in the Epistles. We are Jesus' disciples.

In today's text, Jesus calls the crowd and his disciples and says. **"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"** (Mark 8:34) It is a command of Jesus' discipleship.

However, people seem to have no understanding of discipleship and do not wish for it. These disciples' appearance seems similar to the crowd who shouted Hosanna when Jesus entered Jerusalem. But, Jesus commands his disciples and crowds to keep three things clear, regardless of how people react.

1. The first command of Jesus is to deny ourselves.

The meaning of this word is to reject the selfish mind that only thinks and acts on our own interests. Jesus told his disciples that he must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (Mark 8:31)

These words of Jesus were not what the disciples expected. The disciples hoped that Jesus would drive out the Romans, restore Israel, and become the king rule to Israel.

So Peter, who heard these words, criticizes Jesus. However, Jesus severely rebuked Peter. **"Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men"**

Jesus' command to deny ourselves is to think about God's work. Faith is not thinking with my selfish ways, but thinking and doing according to the will of God. So **Isaiah 55:9** says. **"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts"**

But we find it very difficult to think and act according to God's will, so Jesus tells us to **"deny ourselves"** and follow Him. The way Jesus wants to go is to give up His own interests and serve the world, but the disciples want to go the way that benefit themselves.

In the end, the words to deny ourselves means to always seek the will of God. Therefore, a life of faith is a gradual transition from the heart and actions of seeking our own interests to living for the benefit of the neighbor according to God's will. This is not an easy path, but we should expect maturity in our life of faith through the help of the Holy Spirit.

2. Jesus' second command is to take up my cross.

Here is the best Bible passage to understand Jesus' words to take up the cross. This is **Galatians 2:20**. **"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."**

A life of taking up the cross is realizing the love of Jesus that He accomplished on the cross and accepting that love by faith. When that happens, we take our responsibility toward our neighbors with joy.

Each of the children of the Lord has a responsibility toward their neighbors, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given us. God is faithful. He will not give us responsibility beyond what we can bear. Also, those who realize the love of the cross can bear it with joy. But, we are often overwhelmed with the responsibilities we have to bear.

That is why we should focus on the grace of Jesus' love for us rather than focusing on what we are doing in our life of faith. Otherwise, we will not be able to bear the small responsibilities that we have to bear, and we will complain a lot to the Lord. Therefore, we should be able to seek the Lord's grace even in the smallest things we are undertaking.



3. Finally, the third command Jesus gave is to follow Jesus.

Jesus commanded His disciples and crowds to follow Him. This is more than simply seeing and learning what Jesus did. Jesus completely obeyed the will of God the Father. It was possible because Jesus had a very close relationship with God the Father. Jesus says in **John 10:30, "I and the Father are one."**

After all, when we follow Jesus, we must be one with Jesus. And when we become one with the Lord, Jesus can fully work for us. After all, these things -- denying ourselves, taking up our cross, following Jesus, and obeying Jesus -- cannot be accomplished with our own strength alone. The Lord achieves these things when He becomes one with us and becomes our master completely.

So, the important thing we must do in our daily lives to follow Jesus is to maintain an intimate relationship with Him, and to seek the grace of the Holy Spirit to unite us with the Lord. Reading the words of the Bible, praying to the Lord daily, reflecting on ourselves, and serving our neighbors according to the will of the Lord will be important means for us to become one with the Lord.

Conclusion: The disciple's path through the grace of the Lord

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Jesus says in **Mark 8:35. "For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."** To become a disciple of Jesus, we must be able to throw our life into the ministry of the kingdom of God. That is much, it is heavy to go on the path of discipleship. However, the discipleship is accomplished by the grace of the Lord in our life.

Today is Palm Sunday! What kind of Hosanna is on your mind? Do you shout Hosanna for your selfish benefit? If not, are you shouting Hosanna for your neighbors? We pray that the grace to further understand the will of the Lord will overflow in us.

