

At First Glance

FIRST BAPTIST NORMAN



APRIL 2020 • VOLUME 16 • ISSUE 8

The story of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday is one of the great stories of the Bible and kicks off the most important week in the history of the world — Holy Week.

There are so many parts of the story that we can focus. This year, however, my attention is drawn to the crowd. The crowd spreading their coats, the crowd cutting and waving palm branches, the crowd going ahead of Jesus, the crowd following Him, the crowd shouting Hosanna! Every part of the story testifies to the crowd and the response of the crowd to Jesus.

Crowds. Do you remember crowds? In these days of Covid-19, groups of less than 10 and social distancing of 6 feet or more, crowds have disappeared. I miss the crowds of March Madness and of Opening Day. I miss the crowd of the Spring Game. I miss the crowd of the All City Band and Orchestra concerts.

Mostly, I miss the crowd of gathering with you in worship each Sunday. I miss the crowd of sitting around the tables on Wednesday evening in Hallock Hall to enjoy a good meal and Christian fellowship. I look forward to the day we are reunited in worship and fellowship as the crowd of Christ-followers at FBCN.

In the meantime, I am reminded of Matthew 18:20 when Jesus promised that where two or three have gathered in My name, I am there in their midst. The Smiths have been blessed to gather as a family on Sunday mornings to worship online. We do so in the presence of the Holy Spirit, believing

that the Spirit of God unifies us with each of you as we worship together through the marvel of social media.

It can never take the place of us being together, but in this season of sickness and sheltering in place, the Lord has worked together for good something meant to isolate and separate.

So, as Holy Week 2020 begins, we will miss the crowd, but we must not miss the object of the crowd — Jesus! Whether in a crowd or alone in our living rooms, we must sing our praises to the Lord. For if we become silent, the rocks will cry out! But not on our watch!

Let us be faithful to worship the Lord every day, especially as we reflect on Palm Sunday, Holy Week and anticipate the glory of Easter Sunday.

Your ministry staff continues to pray for you and look for creative ways to serve and minister during these days. Inside this newsletter you will find Holy Week devotions written by our ministry staff. Please take time to read, meditate and pray on them in preparation for Easter Sunday.

In addition, we are working on creative ways to have a presence on social media and to develop “front porch” ministry touches that honor our need for social distancing. Please



DR. WADE SMITH

contact the church office to let us know how you are doing, especially if you and your family are impacted by sickness or need during these days.

I am so blessed to hear how so many of you are responding to build and strengthen community and to serve others during these days. Lifegroups are meeting by Zoom. Some of you have donated supplies and materials. Others are sewing and making gowns and masks for health care workers. The Spirit and Work of Christ is alive in you! Let us continue to love others. Let us continue to persevere. The days may grow long and we may become weary, but the Lord can renew our strength. In His presence, let us live each day with faith, strength and courage.

I look forward to worshipping with you again one day soon. In the meantime please join us on our website, Facebook and other social media outlets for worship as a new service is posted each Sunday morning at 10:30.

Pastor Wade



EASTER DEVOTIONAL EDITION

PALM SUNDAY

APRIL 5

Palm Sunday is the day we remember Jesus entering Jerusalem to the shouts of the crowds proclaiming him Lord and King. The people had seen the miracles Jesus performed, they heard him teach with authority, and they believed he was the one the prophets had foretold.

It was a day of great joy! All eyes were on Jesus as he rode into town on a colt. Crowds gathered along his path placing cloaks along the road and waving palm branches. They proclaimed in loud voices, *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!* When the Pharisees tried to quiet all that was happening, Jesus reminded them that if the people didn't rejoice, the very rocks would cry out.

Today, we need the same encouragement. As our world focuses on a pandemic, we find ourselves bombarded with messages of sickness, pain, and confusion. Even with all that is swirling about, we have the opportunity to refocus and proclaim truth.

On this Palm Sunday, let us turn our eyes on Jesus, our Lord and King! Let us lift up our hearts and voices in worship to the author and finisher of our faith! Hosanna! Hosanna!

— Suzette Mason
Luke 19:28-40;
Zechariah 9:9

Using a fig tree as an example, Jesus teaches his disciples that hypocrisy and fruitlessness will not be condoned. He saw fruitlessness in God's people. Similar to the fig tree, they had life but were not producing godly fruit. What good is a fig tree that doesn't feed? What good is a believer that doesn't produce fruit?

The state of sinfulness had become so condoned within the temple. Leaders were

The teachers of the law and chief priests arrived, questioning his authority. His reply silences them. They send spies to question him about whether or not they should pay taxes to Caesar, and again, his answer silences them. Finally, the Sadducees arrive and ask

This is a pattern Jesus had seen before. At the beginning of his ministry, as he fasted and prepared, Satan came to Jesus. He tempted Jesus to use his Godly powers to serve his own physical needs. He tempted him with all

The Holy Week activities of Jesus were remarkable, except for Wednesday. Nothing is recorded about Wednesday. Could it be that Silent Wednesday was Jesus' *Be still and know* day?

And yet, here we are in the midst of our Silent Wednesday. We have been told to stay home. Schools are closed and many cannot go to work. We are fearful, even despairing. Yet, as we struggle to understand what is going on in our nation and world, I keep coming back to Psalm 46:10. This is our time to be still (to

Jesus condemns self-centeredness and insincere worship. Jesus came to call out the unfruitfulness and hypocrisy. Our sincere worship, sacrificial service, and unashamed witness to God's kingdom is the sweet fruit that Jesus desires. It's what we exist for.

In what areas of your life would Christ find fruitfulness?

splendor and authority, and finally told Jesus to ask God and the angels to save him from his own destruction. Each time, Jesus replied and silenced Satan.

—Angela Atkins (Luke 20:1-21:36)

In the stillness of these days, have you taken the opportunity to be still and to listen to the Lord? Quiet and still days before God are the source of wisdom, strength and perspective.

The stillness of today reminds us that God is with us and that God will be exalted in all the earth. It is Wednesday. Will you take time to be still and to know that God is God?

Jesus didn't have that problem. How do I know? Because Jesus' disciples did almost nothing for him, and yet he loved them. They

As we journey through Holy Week I pray each of us would be able to see Jesus in the darkness, by His grace, and for His glory.

This should come as incredible news since we are no different. And Jesus still loves us! Now it's our turn to love like that, starting with yourself and concluding with that person that drives you crazy. Love them anyway! Give time today, to thank God for loving you anyway. Who, in your life, can you show love to today? They will know we are Christians by our love.

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how the body was laid in it. They, too, went home and prepared perfume but they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

They had seen Jesus die an excruciating death. They had laid him in the tomb. It must have seemed so unreal to them. Their Sabbath may have seemed quiet and restful but yet their hearts were probably in turmoil and their minds full of thoughts of restlessness knowing they were going to take spices to the tomb the next day. Their thoughts probably went to questions similar to, *what do we do now? What next?* Or *why?* But soon they would be reminded of what Jesus had told them.

Let there be no doubt
that Jesus Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed!

– *Wade Smith*
(*Luke 24:1-1*)

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 1: Paul Hawkins, Glen Hubbel, Buzz Jensen, Kubra Karim, Stuart Rucker, Jim Stewart

April 2: Josh Edge, Hazel Jensen, Doug Upchurch

April 3: Ann Borden, Grant Cherry

April 4: Mike Morris, Marley Rogers, Deena Standfast, Lauren Vanderburg

April 5: Roy Brown, Drew Hester, George Landreth II

April 6: Steve Vishanoff, Ernie Chen

April 7: Dan McMillen, Jay Turley

April 8: Marcus Dollard, Scott Rigney,

April 9: Janet Harp, Abigail Schutt, Ginger Shockley, Bella Sullivan

April 10: Trish Foor

April 11: Kathy Ferguson, Jonathan Storm, Joshua Storm

April 12: Teagen Foster, Justin Turley

April 13: Patti Drennan, Barbara Stone

April 15: Chloe Ferguson, Mike Getto, Peter Lee, Mary Varner

April 17: Fern Cockerham

April 18: Jack Green,

April 20: Lee Borden, Ann Hodges, Janette Ketchum, June Shiau, Connie Smith

April 23: Betty Allen, Georgia Barnard, Gloria Murray

April 24: Penny Buchanan, Staci Rhea

April 25: Young Jeon, Ming Kao, Dale White

April 26: Sandy Dismukes, Harold Emery, Kevin Sharp, Erica Wirth

April 27: Michael Klepper, Timothy Schaffner, Jamie Upchurch

April 28: Audra Evans, Dennis Swing, Phil Webb

April 29: Christine Dodd, Kelly Marcum, Patricia Morgan, Fleeta White

April 30: Conan Clough, Annette Meyers

SYMPATHIES

The First Baptist Church family wishes to extend sympathies to:

Kerri Hudson, Paige Hudson, Tyler Hudson, Kody and Kole Hudson at the passing of Kenneth Hudson

The family and friends of Nina Patterson at her passing

The family and friends of Marge Morton

at her passing

Virginia Odell and Dylan Odell-Kesterson at the passing of their husband and grandfather, Jim Odell

Bruce and Tandra Gowin at the passing of his mother, Dorine Heflin

Larry and Bo Cory at the passing of Lee Cory

HOW WE GIVE



ENVELOPE
211 WEST
COMANCHE ST.
NORMAN, OK 73069



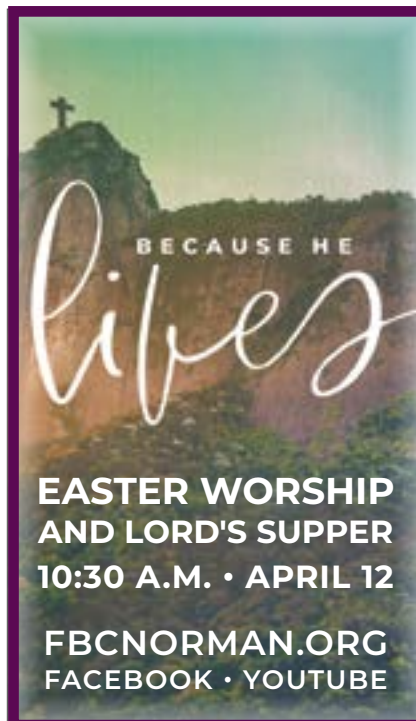
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THANK YOU
FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

PLEASE CONTINUE TO FAITHFULLY SUPPORT THE
CHURCH THROUGH YOUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS



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