



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### March 24, 2024

## Advocate for Others

Recap of sermon from March 24, 2024

Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11 and 27:11-23

Palm Sunday should be reminder that something is... off. If we understand Palm Sunday as the day of celebration and triumphal entry, we may miss an important part of the story. If we jump from Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday and Glorious Resurrection on Easter Sunday, then we miss the revolutionary edge of the story.

“Hosanna” the people shout. Growing up I always simply understood this word as a synonym of Alleluia. That is often how it is treated in worship and song. *Hosanna*, however, is not simply a shout of praise. More literally, it means “Save us.” It is a cry for help. With this small change the whole parade feels different. It’s no longer a parade of praise with people praising Jesus as he rides into town. Now it is a rally. It is a cry for help. It is a call to action from a people weighed down.

Palm Sunday, with Jesus riding into town on a donkey which he meticulously planned, is an organized protest that moves right into Jesus’ demonstration in the Temple. It is public action, and the cries of the people, “Help us Son of David,” are a cry for a new Kingdom.

Meanwhile men like Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, and the High Priest Caiaphas are plotting. Pilate was the governor of Judea and a larger surrounding area, installed by an Emperor to be his stand-in in the region. He may have aligned himself with a man named Sejanus, who was executed for treason in 31 CE. Pilate was suddenly on very thin ice with the Emperor, and may have been searching for some new allies. He found an unlikely partner in Herod Antipas.

Antipas was the son of Herod the Great. Herod the Great was a friend of Julius Caesar and ruled the region as a puppet King with an iron fist. He built the Temple into a grand center of culture, art, commerce, and religion. He made it into one of the wonders of the world through heavy taxes and forced labor. When Herod the Great died the Emperor feared his power and split his kingdom into three parts and divided it between three of his sons, Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip. Archelaus was ruler of Judea (including Jerusalem) was a terrible ruler and was succeeded by a nephew Herod Agrip-

pa. Herod Antipas was the ruler of Galilee, but lusted for control over his father’s entire kingdom. He believed he should be the rightful ruler over Herod the Great’s entire realm.

Caiaphas was the High Priest of the Temple. His power was in keeping the Temple

tax flowing and the commerce around the Temple running. When Jesus interrupted that commerce, he became a target of Caiaphas. All of these political maneuverings were happening as Jesus, from Antipas’s region of Galilee, swept into town with shouts of “Save us!”

The trial we read about with Pilate is no trial at all. A trial is something that is trying to get at the truth. What Pilate conducted was political theater. The whole network of power swirling around ambitious men like Pilate, Antipas, and Caiaphas, the fate of this would-be Messiah from the sticks was sealed. Then, when the tide may have turned in favor of Jesus of Nazareth, the leaders and powerful made sure that the mob would go their way. With whispers, lies, and misinformation, they turned the mob toward violence.

They chose to free Jesus Barabas, the one arrested for a violent insurrection, instead of Jesus the Christ, whose path was forgiveness, grace, generosity, and community. The mob was swayed by the powerful political machinations of those who cared nothing of them or Jesus. They protected only their power. Pilate didn’t care about the truth. He cared about what would keep him in his precarious position.

So the people chose violence. The cries of “Save Us” were drowned out by the shouts of “Crucify him.” The powerful, greedy, and ambitious used the mob for their end. Sin crucified the Christ and shouts of “Save us,” were heard no more.



**Next Week: Easter Sunday**  
**John 20:1-18**