

Palm Sunday – Year B 2009

Mark 11:1-10 Phil 2:6-11; Is.50: 4-7 and the Passion Narrative

1. Of late I have found myself watching Late Night TV and have discovered it is filled, commercials.
2. But let me ask you:
 - a. Wasn't there a time when commercials talked about the *qualities* that made this deodorant, this clothing, this car better than other deodorants, clothes and cars, and would recommend buying them based on what it was?
3. Nowadays, it seems that we are told to buy that deodorant, those clothes that car
 - i. not because of what they are –
 - ii. but rather because of what they say about us when we use them.
 - b. They promise us that if we use that deodorant, if we wear those clothes if we drive that car
 - c. Then we will be the good smelling, well dressed, beautiful car-driving people that everyone will want to be with;
 - i. And that will make us happy.
 - d. Who here has NOT felt that pull on our hearts, that says,
 - i. if only I have that, then I will be happy!
4. This promise is basic to advertising because it is basic to us as humans.
 - a. We all want to be happy; and we believe that the reason we are not is because we don't have something.
 - b. It might be a car, a home, a flat screen TV.
 - c. It might be a friend, a partner a spouse.
 - d. It might be more money, less weight around the middle, or more hair on our heads.
 - e. Whatever it is we think if only have that, then I will finally have the happiness I need.
5. The people of Jerusalem the day Jesus arrived were happy. ,
 - a. For centuries they had believed God would send them a king;
 - i. a mighty strong warrior
 1. who would deliver them from their oppressors
 2. and reestablish the greatest Kingdom they had ever known,
 - a. the Kingdom of David.
 - b. And thus when Jesus rode into town they
 - i. waved palm fronds,
 - ii. threw their cloaks down on the street before him,
 - iii. and shouted "Hosanna" or in English, "save us!"
 - iv. giving him the first century equivalent of a tickertape parade, because they believed that in Jesus they had finally had that king.
6. Of course had they been paying a little more attention,
 - a. They might have noticed his mode of transportation;
 - i. Not the noble steed of a warrior; but a donkey.
 - b. They might have noticed his clothing;
 - i. Not the robes of a king, but of a peasant;
 - c. And in a world without deodorant, we can only imagine how he smelt; certainly not perfumed like the wealthy.

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- d. They might have asked themselves,
 - i. Just what kind of a king are getting in Jesus?
 1. But evidently they did not – yet.
7. That would come a few days later;
 - a. When instead of calling for his enthronement,
 - i. They called for his crucifixion.
 - b. Why had they changed? Because
 - c. Just like when WE buy a car, a piece of clothing or a stick of deodorant, thinking that having it would somehow make us happy
 - d. And then discover that we are not really any more happy than before.
 - e. Jesus had not proven to be the king they expected him to be.
 - f. And thus their shouts of hosanna, save us are really just the flipside of crucify him!
 - g. One expresses their longing for happiness; and the other, their rage when they do not get it.
8. Perhaps they should have paid more attention to that donkey; to Jesus' peasant clothes, or to his lack of cologne.
 - a. These were not signs that Jesus was NOT their long awaited king
 - b. These were signs that Jesus was a different kind of king;
 - c. One ruled through service
 - d. One whose service was love
 - e. One who showed his disciples that happiness would never be found through getting anything; but precisely through giving.
 - f. IF they had understood that; then so much of what Jesus had said might have made more sense.
 - g. Then they would have understood the donkey, the clothes and the smell;
 - h. They would have understood the reason why their supposed king allowed himself to be crushed under the wheel of Roman power
 - i. They would have understood the reason for the arrest, the trial and the cross;
 - j. All of it was meant to teach them, and through them us, something; that to live is to give, not to get; and when we do that freely, NOT expecting anything in return, we will be happy.
9. Let me ask you- what did you come here this morning/evening to GET? It is a fair question. We who sit in these pews are no different here than we are out there; sitting, as I have recently sat, watching television commercials and thinking about what I need to get in order to make me happy.
10. maybe it is that boyfriend, that girlfriend that partner or spouse; maybe it is a job or more money or that bigger apartment. Maybe you just came here to get that piece of palm
11. Well in just a few minutes now we will leave this place; what will you have gotten? . . . not a boyfriend or girlfriend; not the keys to a new car nor a job.
12. But hey at least you got that palm.

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13. That palm which is a symbol a reminder to us all that all to quickly our cries of need can become cries of anger when we do not get what we want; whether it be