

The Last Week of Jesus' Life

Holy Week is fast approaching. This coming Sunday is Palm Sunday, also called Passion Sunday, and it's the most important and solemn week of the church, for which we start to prepare during the season of Lent, these forty days that we walk with Jesus, from the wilderness, in which he spent forty days in prayerful devotion and being also tempted by the devil, to his death in Jerusalem, to finally his glorious resurrection.

When Jesus began his way from Capernaum (in the northern shore of Lake of Galilee) down to Jerusalem (80 miles away and a 4-6 days of travel), where he would die, he made a firm decision to face the challenge, knowing that that journey to the Holy City would be his last one (Luke 9:58). The four writers of the gospels spend most of the space of their writings in describing what happened to Jesus in that last week in Jerusalem. Approximately 35% of any given gospel is dedicated to Jesus' passion and death account, which highlights the importance that it has for telling the story of Jesus. There's no way of talking about the person of Jesus without recounting what happened in Jerusalem that final week, even though he spent most of his life (about 33 years) in the northern part of Israel, in Nazareth. The gospels are, according to some scholars, stories about the passion of Jesus with a long introduction. His death and resurrection become the core of the story because at the end, it is through it that we are forgiven and reconciled to God.

Saint Paul made Jesus' death and resurrection his central motive in his teaching and preaching. He says, "When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified". (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). He also connected our baptism with Jesus' death and resurrection. We are united with his death and resurrection in baptism (Romans 6:2-4).

As baptized children of God, we need to make also his cross central to our daily living. Not only during this Holy Week, but every day and every moment. Teaching about baptism in the Small Catechism, Luther wrote that baptism is not a past event that has no effect on the present. "It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

So, the story of Jesus, what he did and how he lived, is definitely of crucial importance for all to know, but it is his 'death and resurrection' that forms the core of that narrative because of the effects it produces. Only through his dying on the cross and his rising from the dead is that he achieved what we could have never done: be reconciled with God. Our forgiveness and faith are only in Jesus' and we should be reminded of this truth every day, and especially during this coming Holy Week. Amen!

~ *Pastor Borges* | *Associate Pastor*

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