

GATHERING

Prelude

Welcome

Welcome to worship with FPC! We are glad you are here this morning.

If you are new here, we invite you to fill out a welcome card or email secretary@fpcmissoula.org with your information so we can get connected with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it!
Let us prepare our hearts and minds to worship and encounter our living God.

Call to Worship

One: We come to prepare for the holiest of weeks.

**All: We will journey through praise, with joy on our lips;
we will travel through betrayal and death,
cradling hope deep in our hearts.**

One: Jesus leads us through this week, and we will follow,
for He is the life we long for,
He is the Word who sustains us.

**All: We wave palm branches in anticipation,
we lay our love before Him, to cushion His walk.**

One: Setting aside all power, glory and might, He comes:
modeling humility and obedience for all of us.

All: Hosanna! Hosanna!

Blessed is the One who brings us the kingdom of God.

Gathering Song: Hosanna

Refrain: Hosanna! Hosanna! We bow down to the One who comes to save us.

Hosanna! Hosanna! We bow down to the One who comes to save us.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of God.

Blessed is Immanuel who walks with us.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of God.

Blessed is Immanuel who walks with us. *Refrain*

Blessed is the Chosen King of Israel, seated on the throne that will never fail.

Blessed is the Chosen King of Israel, seated on the throne that will never fail. *Refrain*

Merciful God, forgive us when we don't understand Your glory.

Eternal Jesus, you laid down Your life, healing the broken through Your sacrifice.

Merciful God, forgive us when we don't understand Your glory.

Eternal Jesus, you laid down Your life, healing the broken through Your sacrifice. *Refrain*

Written by Morgan Cunningham

PRAISING

Prayer of Adoration

God, we gather on this day to begin a week of contrasts.

From hope to despair to hope again.

As we begin the week, as we join with the crowd,

Help us cut through the noise to see what is happening, to see what is at stake.

As the story unfolds, open us to both the hope and the pain.

In this time of worship, prepare us to celebrate, to weep, and to wait.

We pray in the name of the one who leads the parade,

Jesus the Christ. Amen.

What a Beautiful Name/Agnus Dei

You were the Word at the beginning, one with God the Lord Most High.

Your hidden glory in creation, now revealed in You, our Christ.

What a beautiful Name it is, what a beautiful Name it is,
the Name of Jesus Christ, my King.

What a beautiful Name it is, nothing compares to this.

What a beautiful Name it is, the Name of Jesus.

You didn't want heaven without us, so Jesus, You brought heaven down.
My sin was great, Your love was greater. What could separate us now?

What a wonderful Name it is, what a wonderful Name it is,
the Name of Jesus Christ, my King.
What a wonderful Name it is, nothing compares to this.
What a wonderful Name it is, the Name of Jesus.
What a wonderful Name it is, the Name of Jesus.

Death could not hold You, the veil tore before You; You silenced the boast of sin and grave.
The Heavens are roaring the praise of Your glory, for You are raised to life again.
You have no rival, You have no equal; now and forever, God, You reign.
Yours is the Kingdom, Yours is the Glory; Yours is the Name above all names.

What a powerful Name it is, what a powerful Name it is,
the Name of Jesus Christ, my King.
What a powerful Name it is, nothing can stand against.
What a powerful Name it is, the Name of Jesus.

You have no rival, You have no equal; now and forever, God, You reign.
Yours is the Kingdom, Yours is the Glory; Yours is the Name above all names.

Holy! Holy! are You, Lord God Almighty.
Worthy is the Lamb, worthy is the Lamb.
You are holy! Holy! are You, Lord God Almighty.
Worthy is the Lamb, worthy is the Lamb. You are holy.

What a beautiful Name it is, what a beautiful Name it is,
the Name of Jesus Christ, my King.
What a beautiful Name it is, nothing compares to this.
What a beautiful Name it is, the Name of Jesus.
Brooke Ligertwood; Michael W. Smith**

BELONGING

Kids on the Steps: Welcoming New Members

Nathan Broch, Karen and John Riordan, Jeanie Brenneman, Debbie Schneider,
Toni Morris, Betty Hershman, Melanie Mellgren

Prayer of Confession

Like the people who greeted Jesus as he entered Jerusalem and then later pronounced "Crucify him," we are fickle people who often deny Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Remembering the events of Jesus' last week helps us to see ourselves for what we are:
Sinners in need of a Savior - a Savior we have in Christ.
In honesty and hope, let us confess our sins before God and one another.

On this Sunday, O God, we remember how quickly we change.
How fickle we are, how we pledge our devotion one moment and turn our backs the next.
We go from shouting "Hosanna! Save Us!" to "Crucify Him."

We say that we love our neighbors, and then we turn our backs
on those who are unhoused and hungry in our communities.

We speak up for change and justice in one breath,
and then continue unjust practices in our daily lives
by what we consume and the needs we ignore.

Forgive us, O God, for we are half-hearted believers.
Forgive us, O God, for we are partial justice warriors.
Forgive us, O God, for we tire easily and we forget, and we grow weary.

Forgive us, restore us, and renew us for the journey of faith,
so that we might become whole people who live wholly into Your vision of new life.
Take our branches and our lives, so that we may learn to lay them down in your service, following your way even when we cannot understand.
In the name of Christ, who lived into the fullness of humanity, and whom we follow. Amen.

Song: Trisagion

Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and might - y,
Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, have mer - cy, have mer - cy on us.

Fernando Ortega**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Laying aside judgment, God offers us redemption;

Setting aside anger, God embraces us with love;

Letting go of grief, God pours living water upon us.

One: Friends, this is the Good News: God's steadfast love endures forever.

All: **Hosanna! Blessed is the One who brings us the kingdom of God!**

FORMING

Sermon: Luke 19:29-44

I am not a perfect father. I have two kids, as most of you know, Holden and Addie, who are 2 and change and eight months old, respectively. You all love my kids, and I cannot express my gratitude enough. Holden has been, frankly, my best sermon material I've ever had. He has taught me more about God's love than a hundred sermons could, I think, and why God seems to love His people so much, and why He gets frustrated with them, and why He is jealous for them. Why He hurts for them. More on that later.

It's Palm Sunday today, and it's Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. It's a long passage—Luke 19:29–44—and I'm not going to read it all, but I'll tell the story up to verse 41, where we'll pick up together. He sends two of his disciples ahead for a donkey, saying "the master has need of it." And they go, and they get the donkey, and they bring it back, and it's this public declaration of a prophecy fulfilled that the Messiah will come into Jerusalem—not on a warhorse—but on a donkey. On a colt. And the people start shouting "Hosanna, Hosanna," and they lay down their cloaks on the road for him, welcoming him as a king, and they wave palm branches, and wouldn't you know it, the Pharisees get in this tizzy. They say, "tell your people to quiet down," and he hits them with one of the hardest, coolest lines in all of Scripture, where he says, "if they keep quiet, the very stones will cry out." I love that piece. It's like his declaration that "all of creation testifies to God's plan." Nature sings God's praises, and so should we. But this, this is where our passage picks up, in verse 41:

Main Text: Luke 19:41–44

But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. "How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not recognize it when God visited you."

"As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it..."

Here's the question: why is Jesus weeping?

Let's set the scene again: there's triumph, celebration, public declaration of Jesus as king—but Jesus isn't smiling. He's crying. Why?

There's a lot of reasons. For one, he knows what's coming—so do we. We have the book, we know how the story ends. But it's not just the cross—it's the rejection, the misunderstanding, the lost opportunity for peace, the melting pot of the human condition found in Jerusalem that is rooted in ignorance. It's not about fate, the end at the cross—it's about a broken people with a broken idea of who Jesus is. It's about us, really.

Jesus sees what we don't in this moment, what the people just can't in this moment. See, if you look at Israel's history of oppression, from Egypt, from Babylon, from Rome, in every circumstance where their slavery or oppression ends, it ends with fire. It's blood and ash and God showing up with military might. It's 185,000 Assyrian soldiers encamped around Israel that are destroyed in a moment by an angel of the Lord.

So what do they expect in the King, the Messiah, who has come to set them free from Rome and from sin? They expect what they have always seen in the cycle of slavery and freedom.

They're too immature. We are too immature. They simply can't see it. We can't see it. And this breaks Jesus' heart. He's spent all this time with the masses, with the Pharisees, in the temple, with tax collectors and sinners and fishermen and his best friends, and they simply can't see it. Even the ones who are closest to him. Even when we get to the garden later, down to the wire, we see that Peter, his best friend, pulls out a sword to defend him. They just. Don't. Get. It. Neither do we, sometimes. And we already know how the story ends.

Do you know the frustration? Where you try to explain something and someone just can't understand? It probably doesn't happen with adults as often, but maybe with really young kids. It's not anger, really. It's closer to heartbreak. And I think that's what we see in this passage.

Jesus isn't angry. He's heartbroken. Let me explain.

Let's talk about Holden.

You all know me, and you know my kids, Holden and Addie. Addie is eight months old, Holden is 2 and change. And you all love him so well, and I'm so grateful for that. It's one of the biggest reasons we'll stay here, even when I move on from this position I have here, is because of how well you love my kids, and you have my heart for that. But let's talk about Holden for a second.

Holden says he *needs* a lot of things. Not wants, but needs. One of these things is my iPhone. We'll watch wheels on the bus or animal videos on it, or look at pictures of his grandparents, or videos of trains, or his uncles and aunt. It started out really sweet, like an occasional thing we might do when he's sick, but his lust for it is different now. He *needs* to see it, to touch it. He has to have it. And here's the thing: I know that this device is poison. I know how it splits my attention, and demands my focus, and, perhaps, does it have its redeeming qualities? Yes, of course. But I know how poisonous it is, really. Holden doesn't. He can't understand, not yet. But no matter how gently I explain, or how much I try to persuade him, he simply *cannot* understand how harmful it is. I can't make him see what I see. And that *breaks* me. That *guts* me, that he can't see how harmful it is, that he can't view the sort of prison this creates. And I'm not mad at him—why would I be mad for something that is simply beyond his understanding? I'm *heartbroken* for him.

So when we look at Jesus and his weeping over Jerusalem, you have to see—he weeps the same way—he doesn't weep in bitterness, but in *grief*. It's heartbreak. Do you hear that in his words?

"If only you had known what would bring you peace..."

And it's not just here. It doesn't end here. He carries that grief in his suffering all the way to the cross when we hear him say,

"Father, forgive them—they don't know what they're doing."

These aren't the words of an angry man. **these are words of heartbreak.**

This begs yet another question: So what?

This moment shows us something sacred: God *feels* for us. And this matters, probably as much as anything. Your God isn't unaware of what's going on in your life. He's not ignorant as to what you're going through, or the struggles we walk with, that face us day in and day out.

Jesus doesn't stand distant from our mess, guys. He walks into it, and he weeps in it. Maybe you remember, it's the shortest verse in the Bible, right when he arrives at Lazarus's tomb: "Jesus wept." He felt pain then, he felt pain when riding into Jerusalem, and he feels your pain *now*.

Hebrews 4:15:

"We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses"

He knows our pain. He *has* our pain. When there is suffering, oh my God. He feels it.

He sees the confusion, the shame, the struggle—the parts of us that just don't get it—and instead of turning away, he *weeps with us*.

Let's talk about the good news: He still enters in.

Even when we don't get it... even when we reject him, or cling to what's hurting us... Jesus still comes riding in. He doesn't reject the Jerusalem that rejected him. He doesn't reject the people that rejected him. No—he

does the opposite.

Jesus still sees us.

Jesus still weeps—for us, and with us. **Not because he's mad—because he's heartbroken.**

So when we see what's happening in Ukraine, continued violence, or the blood of thousands shed in Palestine, guess what? God is there, and he's weeping. He's carrying that pain. And for some of us here, maybe that's easy to see. Maybe you believe that.

What about pain that's closer to home? What about how Jesus might have sat with you, not just with things that are far away?

Let's get personal, vulnerable. Let me tell you, honestly, how Jesus has sat in my mess. I struggle with food. Food has been my crutch forever. I eat my feelings away, which as a diabetic, is not a healthy relationship with food. I have been busting my butt for years to lose weight, since before Holden was born, and I am hungry. Every. Single. Day. I can go to China Buffet and put away four plates in fourteen minutes. But even in something as, perhaps menial, as my struggle with food, with my battle with weight, with my self esteem around my body image, Jesus walks right into that and says, "I'm here in it with you." And when I stumble, when I overdo it or step out of bounds, guess who's there? And guess what? **He's not mad. He's heartbroken.**

What about when I was sixteen, and was diagnosed with diabetes and didn't even fully understand what that meant, and my dad and I sat in an endocrinology room at Saint Pats hospital, guess who was in the room with us?

And what about when I was seventeen and wanted to take my own life, guess who was right there with me?

Or when I was nineteen and got off the phone with my older brother telling him I was dropping out of college, guess who else was listening to the phone call with his hand on my shoulder?

Or when I was twenty one and walked away from faith for a season in pursuit of everything I thought I was missing out on, guess who was running after me?

I didn't know it then. I didn't see it, in any of those, not in the moment. I couldn't see it. I couldn't have known. But that doesn't make it any less true. Just because I didn't see it at the time doesn't mean that Jesus wasn't walking right into my mess with me lowering himself to feel what I felt and saying, "Forgive him, Father. He doesn't know what he's doing."

I don't know what you're fighting. I don't know what your struggle with sin is, or where you're looking at Jesus, or looking at the cross, and still not getting it. I know that I don't know where *I'm* looking at Jesus and still not getting it. But I know that in those places, that Jesus is right there, and he's sitting with you, and it's okay. He's saying, "I'm right here with them, Father. They'll understand soon. And I'm going to sit with them in their mess until they do."

He's there. And sometimes, he's crying too.

I think—and I really believe this, we come to church most Sundays, or we call ourselves Christian most times, and expect that there's something different that we have to do with that title. And maybe, in time, that's true. We prove our faith through our actions. But Jesus came because, the truth is, we're never going to get it right ourselves. Jerusalem was never going to understand if he didn't ride in the way he did. The world would continue to weep *alone* without him. But it doesn't, does it?

Because Jesus wasn't the kind of king who came and simply *overcame* death. No, he entered into every part of the human condition. His resurrection does not diminish the sacrifice of the cross—it magnifies it. He came to sit with us in the mess, to cry with us, to hold us.

And when he rose again, he didn't erase the pain.
He proved that even *death* can't keep him from being near.
So until the day we *do* understand, trust this:
Jesus isn't disappointed in you. He's brokenhearted *for* you.
And he's still here.
You don't have to understand everything right now.
You just need to know—**he understands you.**

Song of Response: How Deep the Father's Love For Us



How deep the Fa - ther's love for us, how vast be - yond all meas - ure
Be - hold the Man up - on a cross, my sin up - on His shoul - ders.
I will not boast in an - y - thing: no gifts, no pow'r, no wis - dom.



that He should give His on - ly Son to make a wretch His trea - sure.
A - shamed, I hear my mock - ing voice call out a - mong the scof - fers.
But I will boast in Je - sus Christ: His death and res - ur - rec - tion.



How great the pain of sear - ing loss. The Fa - ther turns His face a - way
It was my sin that held Him there un - til it was ac - com - plished;
Why should I gain from His re - ward? I can - not give an an - swer.



as wounds which mar the Cho - sen One
His dy - ing breath has brought me life,
But this I know with all my heart:



bring man - y ones to glo - ry.
I know that it is fin - ished.
His wounds have paid my ran - som.

Stuart Townend**

STEWADING

Invitation to Offering

Today we are grateful for a Lord who weeps for what breaks our hearts,
For a Lord who descends through a parade of misunderstanding into our sin and suffering.

The invitation of this holy week is to see ourselves, to see our crowd, to see the world, through the eyes of Jesus: to weep with our Lord, offering our own hearts to be broken open by what breaks his.

Let us offer the sacred gift of our attention to his passion.

Musical Offertory: Meditation on Beautiful Savior

Arr. Cathy Mocklebust***

Prayers of the People

Hosanna Lord, Save us. For us you embraced this lonely journey of compassion.

Hosanna Lord, Save us. For us you risked this threatening path of truth.

Hosanna Lord, Save us. For us you descended the Mount of Olives broken-hearted, to set us free from our rebellion and resentment, to save us from our sinful slavery to pleasure, power, popularity and pride.

Lord Jesus draw your disciples near, that we might weep for what you see.

Lord Jesus draw your disciples close, that we might open our hearts to your suffering love.

Lord Jesus draw your disciples near, that gathered at the Table of your generosity and scandalized by the cruelty of your cross, we might be deserters, deniers, and betrayers now *transformed* by the grace of your sacrifice and the hope of your resurrection.

In you, Lord Jesus, we know that our God comes close to our suffering. And so we lift up all that is broken to you, trusting in your heart to heal. We pray for those experiencing grief at searing loss – loss of love, loss of dreams: be their comfort. We pray for those suffering from mental and physical illness: be their health and hope. We pray for those living in the midst of violence and war: be their peace. We pray for everyone who longs for your joy: be their wholeness.

Give us courage this week, Lord, to be your disciples, to walk the way of your cross, bearing witness to the lifegiving, upside down vision of our Servant King. Hosanna, Lord, Save us from ourselves that we might enjoy your harmony, simplicity, humility and honesty; your courtesy, purity, laughter, forbearance; your generosity, justice and joy. Give us courage this week, Lord, to be with you in the Temple courts, with you at your

Passover table, with you in Gethsemane, with you through your arrest and mockery, with you in your agony on the cross, with you into even the darkness of death, that we might await with reverential anticipation the New Dawn of the Third Day.

All this we pray in the name of Jesus, the one who taught us to pray, saying:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

SENDING

Sending Song: Jerusalem



See Him in Je - ru - sa - lem, walk - ing where the crowds are.
See Him there up - on the hill, hear the scorn and laugh - ter;
See Him there up - on the cross, now no long - er breath - ing;

Once these streets had sung to Him, now they cry for
Si - lent as a lamb He waits, pray - ing to the
Dust that formed the watch - ing crowds, takes the blood of

mur - der. Such a frail and lone - ly Man hold - ing
Fa - ther. See the King who made the sun and the
Je - sus. Feel the earth is sha - king now, see the

up the heav - y cross. See Him walk - ing in Je -
moon and shin - ing stars. Let the sol - diers hold and
veil is split in two, and He stood be - fore the

ru - sa - lem on the road to save us.
nail Him down, so that He could save them.
wrath of God, shield - ing sin - ners with blood.

Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson and Tiarne Tranter**

Benediction

Leading in Worship This Morning:

Liturgist: Bill Maitland
Kids on the Steps: Dan Cravy
Sermon: Austin Graef
Musicians: Emma Thackston, Gina Stewart,
Joselyn Thomsen, Marley Ball, Steve Lympus
Slide, Sound and Video Techs: Char Davis,
Zane Reneau and Dan McCaffery

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Bell Choir Director: Tomi Kent
Parish Associates: Rev. Janet Malone and Rev. Bob Schurr
Preaching Pastor, Blackfoot Church of the Potomac: Natalie Mauer