

Mark 11:1-11

March 20, 2016

“Do you see Him?”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Palm Sunday

Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Introduction] ***Do you see Him?*** Jesus.

 He rides into Jerusalem.

 The crowd shouts, “Here is King David’s greater son.”

And then the...

praises of Palm Sunday quickly turn into screams for His bloody death.

Pilate would let Him go.

Over and over again Pilate declares that Jesus does not deserve to die.

 But the outcry and accusations grow louder. “Crucify Jesus!

 Let the murderer and rebel Barabbas go!”

And they get what they want. The governor caves in to the crowd.

Jesus is given the death sentence.

 Capital punishment of the highest order.

 Brutally nailed to a pole.

 Crucified at the place called “The Skull.”

 In the midst of true criminals.

Do you see Him?

Bystanders, soldiers, and one of the criminals crucified with Him sneer. Mock. Deride. Scorn.

“Fake! He’s a fake. He’s all show.

 He saved others! But he can’t save himself!

 If he’s the Christ, the chosen one of God,

 then he’d come down from this cross!

 He’d prove he is not a fraud.”

But Jesus stays. He won’t come down.

No matter what the shame. No matter what the scorn.

Instead, He prays.

[Forgive]

“Father, forgive these folks. They just don’t know what they’re doing.”

Forgive?

Isn't that the last thing in the world Jesus should be praying for?

Forgive?

Shouldn't He hop off that cross? Wouldn't that be the ticket?

Herod would be tickled.

Pilate would be released.

And the crowds, they would be wowed!

It is then ... Jesus could really transform the world!

With brass knuckles and a sword he could avenge...

Avenge all the wrong and injustice done to Him.

And the sooner the better!

Sack that political Governor Pilate.

Make that immoral Herod shorter by a head.

Give it to Peter — who denied Him,
and the other disciples who ran and hid,

and all those who hated Him

– give it to them in spades! An eye for eye!

But Jesus will have none of that. Revenge is not His cup of tea.

He's in the business of forgiveness.

Quite certain on that!

Do you see Him? "Father, forgive them."

And it's a forgiveness for everything.

It is a forgiveness for all sin. For every sinner.

Because of Jesus Himself. Because He stays hanging on the cross.

Numbers with sinners. He pours out His soul to death.

Wretched you say? Worthless? A waste?

No. Just the opposite.

[*Sinners*]

In the very depths of this incredibly horrific death

the power of Jesus to save is revealed.

His love is so immense. So astonishing.

As He bears the sin of world in His Body

He prays – He intercedes – for sinners.

For all sinners. For you. For me.

He forgives the ungodly. Even a criminal. Yes, a wretched criminal who now clings to this crucified Jesus for his salvation: ***“Jesus remember me. Remember me according to your mercy. According to your forgiveness when you come into your kingdom.”***

And lo and behold Jesus is in His kingdom.

Do you see Him?

Right there as He hangs dying.

King Jesus reigns among sinners.

And He extends His kingdom to sinners:

“Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

And then Jesus prays the Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep prayer ***“Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit”*** and dies.

[***Sees Jesus***]

The Roman centurion sees Jesus:

“Surely this man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15)

Oh, and there were others.

Joseph from Arimathea. He sees Jesus.

Went to Pilate and got permission to take the body.

The women see Jesus. The Disciples see Jesus.

And other acquaintances and followers of Jesus see Him.

Trusted in Him. Loved Him. They were nothing. Jesus was everything. Especially in His dying.

And so here you are today.

Maybe it has been a couple of years... a decade, a couple of decades... since you have been Confirmed.

For... ***Claire, Lindsey, Reece, Kyle, Nate, Kylea, Michael, Paige, Kayla and Rodney.***

Today is your Confirmation Day.

Will you confess Jesus to be the Christ for you

like the criminal and the centurion? ***Do you see Jesus?***

Or could you care less?

Are you just going through the motions today?

Are you just coming to church because it is Sunday?	Are you being confirmed to make your parents, to make your grandparents happy?
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Does Jesus giving His life into death for the forgiveness of all your sins mean nothing to you? I sure hope not.

Because the consequences of unbelief and not confessing Jesus are disastrous. Jesus Himself says: ***“Whoever confesses Me before men, I will also confess before My Father who is heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”***

[***Conclusion***]

So once again I ask. ***Do you see Him?***
There He is! On the cross. King Jesus.
Savior Jesus. For you. For your salvation.

Jesus, who prays even for you: ***“Father, forgive them.”***
Who promises even to you: ***“Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”***

You are forgiven. Jesus died for you. You are very precious to Him. That you believe in Him, trust Him for salvation, and confess Him for such, means that your baptism is bearing fruit in your life.

“Go and make Disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching.”

You have been baptized.
You have been taught, and I pray you keep reading and learning.
Now, go. And come back to the next service. Amen

Now, let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Amen!