

Palm Sunday 2023
Faithfulness is a Fruit
Ephesians 2:18-22
Matthew 21:8-11

I. Intro

- A. When I read the Palm Sunday account in scripture, I am reminded that people were celebrating, before they turned to attacking Jesus later the same week.
- B. We see the people caught up in excitement and emotion, and they react in the flesh.
- C. The same mouths that shouted “Hosanna” also shouted “Crucify.”
- D. This is not as obvious today, but still prevalent in our society.
- E. Faithfulness is very hard to see in our world.
- F. This should not be so in the church!
- G. FAITHFULNESS IS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

II. Text

- A. Verse 18: Those brought near, have the blessing of the SPIRIT
- B. Verse 19: Members of the household of God, not by lineage, but by Grace through FAITH.
- C. Verse 20: Christ is the CORNERSTONE of our household of faith
- D. Verse 21: The presence of the SPIRIT’S work, and the foundation of Christ, Grow us into something different:
 1. No longer a place of depravity and separation from God
 2. BUT A HOLY TEMPLE!
- E. Verse 22: We are a dwelling place for God
 1. The Holy Temple is the dwelling place for God
 2. And we are being built into that by the work of the Spirit!
- F. Now Read Matthew 21:8-11
 1. Verse 8:
 - a) Traditionally called the triumphal entry, for good reason
 - b) A kings welcome as he returns from the battlefield victorious
 - c) The victory was won when the promise was made
 - d) The victory was complete when He died in our place
 2. Verse 9: The crowds knew why he was there and who he was.
 3. Verses 10-11: The entire city was then confronted with the truth

III. Point

- A. The Crowd will gather
 1. Many gather when something exciting is going on, or when they get a chance to see something special
 2. Why do people gather in groups?:
 - a) Expectation
 - b) Curiosity
 - c) To solve problems
 - d) To cause problems
 - e) To experience the energy of the group
 3. This crowd gathered for all these reasons, but the effect was not lasting.
 4. Something was missing from this Crowd:
 - a) These were the people who were eye witnesses to being brought near.
 - b) But these people did not have the Holy Spirit
 - c) Therefore, they did not have the fruit of the Spirit.
 5. To remain faithful to this Spiritual Cause, without the Spirit...impossible.
 6. They fell away quickly
 - a) They did not have the Spirit as guide.
 - b) They did not have the foundation of Christ.
 - c) They were not prepared to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

7. In other words...they were normal
 - B. The Spirit will work
 1. But when the Spirit is at work in you, you are no longer normal!
 2. You bear fruit that matches the evidence found in the verses we have studied today.
 3. You are not tossed around by every wave of doctrine
 4. You no longer search for what your itching ears want to hear.
 5. You bear the fruit of the Spirit, and stand in contrast with the pattern of the world.
 6. The Fruit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
 - a) This fruit cannot be produced in the flesh
 - (1) God is Love
 - (2) We rejoice in the Lord
 - (3) Jesus brings peace
 - (4) It is the kindness of God that brings us to repentance
 - (5) Faithfulness is only because of Christ's work
 - (6) Gentleness comes through relationship
 - (7) Self-control is the counted work of the Spirit.
 - b) This Crowd was not marked by any of these fruits
 - c) They did things as a normal human, with a carnal mind.
 7. The Spirit is not done!
 - C. The Result is clear
 1. FAITHFULNESS is a FRUIT only produced by the work of the Spirit.
 2. This crowd clearly showed a lack of faithfulness, and no true understanding of their spiritual condition.
 3. We can give reserve harsh criticism because Jesus was going to die for our sins, by the plan of God, but the people had no problem switching teams midstream on their own.
 4. In Ephesians we see that the work of the Spirit is growing us into the dwelling place of God by the work of the Spirit,
 - a) Therefore, we are in that process today
 - b) Therefore, there is a high expectation.
 5. Faithfulness is a FRUIT!
 - a) We should be faithful to our Lord!
 - (1) He has filled us
 - (2) We are His, a new creation in Christ
 - b) We should be faithful to our family!
 - (1) Serve your family well
 - (2) Don't quit when it gets hard or inconvenient
 - (3) Serve in the power of Christ!
 - c) We should be faithful to our commitments!
 - (1) Let your yes be yes
 - (2) Follow the Spirit's guide to make possible this challenge.
 - d) We should be faithful to our church!
 - (1) Don't abandon the front lines of ministry on a whim or opinion.
 - (2) Commit to being a part of the family of faith, and stay the course!
- IV. Close
 - A. IN JESUS, we are being BUILT TOGETHER in to a DWELLING PLACE
 - B. FOR GOD
 - C. BY THE SPIRIT!

[Eph 2:18-22 ESV] 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Why We Gather:

1. Worshiping together is part of God's intent in making us relational. He who is relational in Himself as Trinity created us needing one another (Gen 2:18). Worshiping with others is one expression of God's creative intent.
2. It reminds us that we're not alone in our Christian walk. Many of us struggle most in being faithful—or worse, in surrendering to temptation—when we're by ourselves. At least for the worship service, we remember that others are walking the same path with us.
3. Our engagement in worship is encouraging to others. We have learned that it's great to see brothers and sisters in person. Others encourage me, and I trust my being there strengthens them, too. The unity of heart and focus that true worship brings can help even the most discouraged believer find hope again.
4. Non-believers who see us worship might sense our love and awe of the Lord as we worship and praise Him. This assumes, of course, that lost people are in our churches—but if those who are present sense genuine humility, deep gratitude, and heartfelt commitment to God, perhaps God will use that experience to turn their hearts to Him.
5. There's just something special about the people of God singing His praises together. No matter what the worship style is, focusing on God and lifting His name together can be a powerful experience. Bob Kauflin puts it this way: "A worshiping community recognizes that passionate times of singing God's praise flow from and lead to passionate lives lived for the glory of Jesus Christ."^[i]
6. It is in our gathering together that we provoke one another to love and good works (Heb 10:24-25). We do that through other means as well, but encouragement to persevere in faithfulness is one task of the gathered body. Walking arm-in-arm as we serve Him and knee-to-knee as we pray together compel us to faithfulness.
7. The gathering together of the body of Christ to hear from their under-shepherd is a privilege, indeed. A worship gathering is a primary means of corporate discipleship, when the pastor accountable to God for watching over their souls (Heb 13:17) directs listeners to Christ. It matters that we gather.
8. It is what the early church did. Scholars debate the size of their gatherings, but we do know they shared life together—including worship (Acts 2:42-47). Gathering together for them may have been a brief respite from a dangerous world, but it was also a place of encouragement to go out and face that world again with the hope of the gospel.