



**SAINT JAMES'**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
Fremont, California

## SERMON

5. April, 2009. Palm Sunday

Title: "Walk The Walk"

Text: St. Mark 11:1-11

J.J.



It is often questioned why Palm Sunday is also the Sunday of the Passion. What starts off as "the triumphal entry into Jerusalem" at the beginning of our liturgy today, will suddenly change and race all the way to Good Friday by the end of today's worship. Why? Well, the simple answer is: because that's the way it happened. What starts out as a festive parade, with the waving of palm branches and singing and celebration, quickly ends in less than a week with suffering and death. The very people who are shouting: "Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord" . . . these very people by week's ends will be shouting: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Today, at the beginning of Passion Week, you and I are invited by Mark to make once again this sacred journey . . . to "Walk this Walk."

The Gospel of Mark, which is our gospel for Year B, can be viewed primarily as a Passion narrative with an extended introduction. In fact, in the original writing, the Gospel of Mark ends abruptly at Mark 16:8 with the women leaving the empty tomb quickly, not saying anything to anyone about what they had seen and heard. No resurrection! To understand Mark at all, one must look at the cross. The entire Gospel of Mark moves us toward the cross. And, Mark invites us to "Walk the Walk."

To be sure, we ourselves would probably prefer to jump right from the waving of palm branches and the singing of hosannas . . . we would just as soon jump right to Easter Sunday and resurrection . . . but that's not the way it is. And, as much as we would like to have Jesus not go to Gethsemane, as much as we might wish to stop Judas, as much as we would like to get after Peter for his three denials of Jesus . . . in Mark, the cross is not to be avoided. There is an old saying among those who have been involved in any kind of twelve step program: Don't just talk the talk, but walk the walk. Mark invites us today, to "Walk the Walk" and not just talk good things about Palm Sunday or Easter. "Walk the Walk," all the way.

This year, we have a wonderful opportunity to do just that. This year at St. James' we are observing a full . . . a very full Holy Week. Today, we will read the entire Passion Narrative according to St. Mark; tomorrow in our Chapel at 10am, we will read the Passion according to St. Matthew and celebrate the Eucharist; on Tuesday, at 10am, we will read the Passion according to St. Luke and celebrate the Eucharist; on Wednesday we will have our regular mid-week celebration of the Eucharist; on Thursday we remember the institution of the Lord's Supper in the Main Church beginning at 7pm, concluding with the stripping of the altar; on Good Friday, we observe the Stations of the Cross at Noon with Reserve Sacrament and at 7pm, the Veneration of the Sacred Cross with the reading of the Passion according to St. John; on Saturday, at 10am, we will pray "Prayers at the Tomb" (a traditional service for Altar Guild members—but all are welcomed!), and then later that night, at 8:30pm, the Great Vigil of Easter. It's a full week . . . a very full week, but I invite you, as you are able, to make the journey of the Passion of our Lord . . . to "Walk the Walk." Amen.

SDG

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