

From one lonely person to many others, Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are indeed trying times. I don't know about you but about all I have gotten out of these past few weeks is loneliness and a new vocabulary. We have all learned new words like Coronavirus (try looking that up in a dictionary), Social distancing, Shelter in place, Corvid-19 and my personal favorite PPE (Personal Protection Equipment). It's almost a new language and sadly we have all learned to speak it. As Holy Week draws to a close and Resurrection Sunday gets closer, I find myself lamenting what we have missed this year. The joy of Palm Sunday worship, the quiet that goes with Maundy Thursday as we hear again Jesus' word to the disciples in the upper room and consider how we so often betray Jesus. Sometimes in selling out to the demands of others as Judas did. Denying him for the sake of social acceptance like Peter. Or just by doing and saying nothing as the majority of believers on the fateful night. Sharing in Holy Communion and remembering that even with the failing of everyone around him, Jesus was still looking to the cross for their and our sake. I miss Good Friday. What an amazing name we have given such a horrible day. I miss the solemnness of gathering to remember that God's Only Son died for our sins. The perfect gave up his life for the imperfect.

There is something about going from the excitement and joy of Palm Sunday with the cheers of a crowd to the quiet, personal realization of Jesus' death that makes even the troubles of this day fade in comparison. As much as I enjoy and love Holy Week services, Holy Week is not about us. Holy Week is not about what we do, it's about what Jesus did. Even when the demands of the day say we can't gather together Jesus still speaks of his love for believers. Even if we can't worship in the same space, Jesus still bore our sins on the cross, he took our punishment and, in his death, he cleanses us of our sins. As

much as things have changed for you and me Jesus remains the same, forgiving, loving, and most of all understanding.

Of all the Holy Weeks I have experienced from childhood through thirty-five years of being a pastor, Holy Week 2020 will be one I will never forget, even if I try. This year Holy Week is different, lonely and sad, but in it all the old, old story and the old, old words are still true Jesus Christ is Lord of all, we are still forgiven children of God and eternal life is our in Jesus Christ our Lord. Be Joyful, be thankful and be faithful.

In Christ's Love,

*Pastor Paul*