

Palm Sunday Matthew 26:14–27:66
When the King Is Rejected, God Is Still Working

When Expectations Collapse

What begins in celebration can quickly move toward confusion and disappointment.

Plans were made. Hopes were high. Prayers were offered. But the outcome looked completely different. Something similar happened in Jerusalem during that week.

On Palm Sunday, the crowd welcomed Jesus with joy: **“Hosanna to the Son of David!”** They waved branches. They celebrated. They believed their king had arrived. But only days later, the same city cried: **“Crucify him!”** What changed?

Jesus did not change. But their expectations did not match God’s plan. They wanted a king who would fix their situation immediately. But Jesus came as a king who would save them eternally. And when he did not meet their expectations, they rejected him. Yet even in that rejection, **God was still working.**

God Was Working Even When People Failed

Judas betrayed Jesus. One of the twelve. One who walked with him. One who knew him. He exchanged Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Then Peter – strong, confident Peter – denied Jesus three times. And the rest of the disciples scattered. Those closest to Jesus failed him. From a human perspective, everything was falling apart. But this was not outside God’s plan. God was still working.

This truth meets us where we live. There have been seasons of disappointment, moments when trust was shaken, and times when even we fail ourselves. But human failure did not cancel God’s purpose. God still worked/still working through broken people. [Joseph said to his brothers who sold them to Egypt] “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.” – Genesis 50:20.

God Was Working Even When It Seemed Silent and Unjust

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed: **“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.”** But heaven seemed silent. No immediate answer. No visible intervention. Then came the trial. False witnesses spoke.

Truth stood in the room – but was rejected. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent yet still handed him over. Everything looked unjust. Everything looked wrong. Yet God was still working. And this speaks into life today.

There were seasons when prayers seemed unanswered. When doing the right thing still led to hardship. When life felt unfair. But silence did not mean God was absent. Even when unseen, God was still at work. No one understood the mystery of God’s hidden work more than Isaiah, who declared: **“Truly, you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, the Savior.”** – Isaiah 45:15

God Was Working Even When It Looked Like the End

Then the worst unfolded. Jesus was crucified. Darkness fell over the land. And hope seemed to slip away. And Jesus cried: **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”** Then he breathed his last.

He was buried. A stone was rolled into place. Guards were posted. Everything was sealed. It looked final. It looked finished. But do you think it was not the end? God was still working. Because what looked like defeat was actually redemption unfolding.

This truth reaches into the spaces we often carry silently. Moments when it seemed like nothing more could be done. There are seasons when doors appear closed – when what once felt secure becomes uncertain, when the path ahead is unclear, and when we are left holding questions without answers.

I have seen, both here and elsewhere, an incredible resilient faith among believers – Christians say, like Paul: **“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; struck down, but not destroyed.”** – 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 They keep moving forward despite adversity, because they trust that God often does His deepest work in what feels like the end.

Standing at the Beginning of the Passion

Palm Sunday brought us to a turning point. The crowd welcomed Jesus with praise, yet the shadow of the cross was already near. It was a moment of tension — celebration on the surface, but suffering ahead.

And that speaks into our lives. There are times when we stand in uncertain places — when things are not yet broken, but not yet whole either. Moments when: expectations begin to shift; prayers are still waiting; the path ahead is unclear

Yet even here, at the beginning of the Passion, one truth remains: **God was still working.** Working through our human weaknesses. Working through uncertainty that faces us.

Working in ways not yet fully seen by our own eyes So as we walk through this Holy Week, we do not rush ahead — we walk with Christ.

Trusting that even when we do not yet see the outcome, God's purpose is unfolding. **What began with praise... was already moving toward redemption. Amen.**