



April 5, 2020 Palm Sunday
Abba, Father!



Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9,17-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Matthew 21:1-11

In the first reading the prophet Isaiah gratefully acknowledges that he receives daily help from the Lord God and promises to remain faithful and not rebel under any difficult circumstances. The prophet also emphasizes that he is gifted with words and will use this gift to help the weary and the tired and when necessary confront the evil doers.

The prayer of the Psalmist cries out as one who has suffered grievously, both physically and emotionally. It is an arousing lament that cries out to God by one who believes there will be divine help. It is in this belief that the theme changes to praise and the Psalmist will proclaim God to all who will listen.

In the second reading Paul describes Christ Jesus as the One in the form of God who emptied himself to take on our human nature. The humility of Jesus, his obedient acceptance of death on the cross indicates an important reason why he is greatly exalted by God and why he is our Lord. In some way Paul is also implying that the faithful may likewise be persecuted but will be raised to a new life in the Lord.

In the Gospel Jesus is greeted by very large crowds preceding and following him saying: "Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest." In Jerusalem they asked who is this man and the response was, "This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

**The Father was not powerless to intervene,
The Son did not want to suffer,
The Holy Spirit was in command of the life and death situation.**

Words

We hear many, many words these days. Some are kind, some are cruel, some are wise, some are foolish. The prophet Isaiah uses his words to help the suffering while on the other extreme there were those who falsely accused Jesus. For Jesus this was a time to be silent, even when the crowd called for the release of Barabbas. The Passion (Matthew 26:14-27:66) reveals he was scourged and crucified; his last words on the cross indicate the pain and anguish he was suffering: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Speech is a primary way that reveals the thoughts of the mind, i.e., as thoughts so the words. The thoughts of the crowd condemning Jesus were clear when they shouted to release Barabus, a criminal and murderer.

The word "**abba**" means father and was often used by Jesus when praying to his Father in heaven. Hence we commonly think of **Jesus as Son of the Father**.

On the other hand consider the name Barabbas; the prefix "**bar**" means son, hence his name, **Bar-abbas**, also means **son of the father**.

Sometimes words may seem similar but dramatically different interpretations and impacts as, for example, the "son of the father" and the "Son of the Father."

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Sound is a wave with diminishing echoes,
gossip amplifies with the hush-hush of, "Let me tell you!"
It is a mistake to trap others in their faults
by passing on small-minded hearsay.

Don't participate with wagging tongues,
they are lost in a multiplicity of words
that return nothingness to their senders
and achieve no end except to destroy the peace of many.

Sound fades away in a vacuum
but even then
they would say, "Read my lips!"
and continue their chatter.

It is a heavier burden to criticize others
and justify our own actions.
A lighter onus is to keep track of
our own shortcomings in a quiet way.

The words of a just man have staying power,
they penetrate the heart of the matter.
Considerate words are like shielding branches,
their tranquil leaves unfurling peace.

Peaceful nights appear
when silent watches of the day are practiced.
Better to hush-up with a silence
that resonates a worthy intention.