

Reflections on the Shared Journey-

The last week of Jesus' life was filled with efforts to communicate – with the crowds, with the religious authorities, with his own disciples. Each day he taught the crowds that gathered in the Temple while representatives from different religious groups challenged him. Much of his focus that week – particularly the Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem and the reinterpretation of the Passover – specifically targeted the Twelve and their struggle to understand the ways of the Kingdom. Again and again, he sought to lead people beyond the rigidity of their thinking and belief, challenging them to think and see from a different perspective – the perspective of the Kingdom.

Like the disciples during that week, we too often struggle to understand the ways of the Kingdom that Jesus taught. The ways of grace, the servant way to greatness, the priority of people and relationships over things – all go against the grain of our own thinking and living.

Thus, Holy Week offers us the opportunity to hear again what we have difficulty hearing – to examine what we have difficulty understanding – to explore what we have difficulty embracing. Just as Jesus taught the crowds in the Temple that week, so the various worship services of Holy Week – Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday – invite us to hear again. Like the Palm Sunday entrance into Jerusalem, each service becomes an acted-out sermon that seeks to reach beyond the defenses of our deep-engrained thinking, providing us a glimpse of God and God's ways.

In the various experiences of worship and reflection this week, may we encounter God and ourselves in new and fresh ways. May we understand what Jesus was (and is) attempting to teach us about the Kingdom. Then, joining hearts and voices together, we'll greet Easter Sunday morning with a joyous *Alleluia!*

I look forward to sharing each experience of worship this week.

Grace and peace, Steve