

**PALM SUNDAY/SUNDAY OF THE PASSION**  
**MARCH 20, 2016**

**"PASSION AND PROMISE"**

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Today is called PALM SUNDAY or the SUNDAY OF THE PASSION. This week is called GREAT and HOLY! Each day of this week has special meaning in the life of every child of God. And it all leads up to the events of Friday, the day we call GOOD, but in reality it is anything but good! But then... we know how this story ends! And without the BAD of GOOD Friday there will be no FIRST LIGHT of the Easter Vigil on Saturday, and no SHOUTS OF PRAISE on Easter Sunday. But with all of that going on this week, there is one more event that is getting the attention of this crazy world we live in.

On Good Friday two classic super-heroes will come head-to-head, in what is expected to be a blockbuster movie. Friday is the release of the movie *"Batman Verses Superman: Dawn Of Justice."* Batman and Superman come face to face! And while the title says "JUSTICE" the point of conflict is really "POWER." Who has the most power? How is that power used? And is that kind of power good for our world? NO SPOILERS! You will have to judge the movie for yourself. But the question it raises for us is: *What kind of superhero DOES this world need, and what makes a superhero both SUPER and a HERO?*

On this SUNDAY OF THE PASSION St. Luke answers this question in his story of the Passion of Our Lord. Having told the story of the Palm Sunday Parade back in chapter 19, Luke goes on in chapters 22 and 23 with the PASSION and the PROMISE of Jesus. We have already heard this morning the entire story of the Upper Room, the Garden, the Betrayal, the Denial, the Accusation, the Mockery, the Conviction, the Crucifixion and the Death. This is a story about PASSION and PROMISE!

In the UPPER ROOM Jesus shows His PASSION in the giving of His body and blood for us. And in this act of eating and drinking Jesus give us the PROMISE of the forgiveness of our sins.

In the GARDEN Jesus prays with PASSION, more than once, that His Heavenly Father might find another way to get this job done. But then His Passion turns to PROMISE when He gives His life over to His Heavenly Father and says, *"Not My will, but Yours be done."*

When Jesus is betrayed His PASSION, even for His Disciples becomes clear. And then He turns once again to the PROMISE and without any further action, He gives His life over to the hands of those who have come to arrest Him.

Jesus is brought to the Roman governor Pilate, and ACCUSED of perverting the nation. Jesus' PASSION is His love for that nation and all the people, and His PROMISE is to keep them safe like a mother hen protects her chicks under her wings.

When Jesus is CONVICTED He stands silent before Pilate and His PASSION for the people is repaid with shouts of "Crucify Him!" And the will of the people becomes Jesus' PROMISE to His Heavenly Father, *"Your will be done."*

At the CRUCIFIXION Jesus' PASSION for the people is repaid with nails in His hands and His feet, mockery from the crowd and even more abuse from both the military and the religious leaders. And Jesus' PROMISE, even as He hangs on the cross, is found in two powerful lines: *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."* AND *"Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

And at the point of DEATH Jesus' PASSION for the people comes full circle as He gives up His life into the hands of His Heavenly Father. And the PROMISE... well... this might just be the SPOILER to this story. Because the story does not end here! Jesus has promised His disciples all along that He will return, that He will be back, that He will see them all again.

BUT THEN... that is the rest of the story! That is where the PASSION and the PROMISE of this day will take us. That is why this is PASSION SUNDAY and this week is called HOLY and GREAT!

Passion Sunday challenges us to answer the question that we asked back at the beginning: *What kind of superhero does this world need, and what makes a superhero both SUPER and a HERO?*

The only superhero we really need is Jesus. Jesus comes fully armed with PASSION and PROMISE. His PASSION is His love for every child of God, and His PROMISE is to never stop loving us.

He shows forgiveness and He shows faithfulness, the only kind of power that can overcome sin and death. In the cross of Jesus Christ we will find the only SUPERHERO we will ever need. What makes Him SUPER is His PASSION and what makes Him a HERO is His PROMISE.

As we live the days of this GREAT AND HOLY WEEK, focus on Jesus and give thanks for His PASSION and His PROMISE.

Here's the SPOILER: At the end of this story, Jesus wins. And we can share His victory. LIFT HIGH THE CROSS!

And all God's children say,

Amen.

**Sola Deo Gloria!**