

**Palm/Passion Sunday**  
**Matthew 27:11-54**

It begins with a question.

Not loud.

Not dramatic.

Almost... administrative.

“Are you the king of the Jews?”

And I find myself drawn not to the power of the question,  
but to the restraint of the answer.

“You say so.”

No argument.

No clarification.

No attempt to control the narrative.

Just a quiet refusal to be named by power on its own  
terms.

And I wonder

how often we spend our lives trying to answer questions  
that were never asked in good faith.

Trying to prove ourselves  
to systems that have already decided who we are.

Trying to speak clearly  
into rooms that are not listening.

Jesus does not do that.

He stands there  
unadorned, undefended  
and lets the truth be what it is.

But the room does not stay quiet.

Rooms like that never do.

There is always a movement toward resolution.  
Toward decision.  
Toward outcome.

So Pilate turns to the crowd.

As if truth can be decided by consensus.  
As if justice can be outsourced.

“What should I do with him?”

And the question lands among them like a spark.

And what rises is not discernment  
but momentum.

“Crucify him.”

I have been thinking this week about how quickly a crowd  
forms.

Not just in streets, but in hearts.

How easily we gather around a story  
about who is right,  
about who is dangerous,  
about who must be removed.

And how rarely we notice the moment  
when we stop being people  
and become a chorus.

“Crucify him.”

It is not only a historical moment.

It is a human one.

Pilate washes his hands.

And we know this gesture.

We have performed it ourselves.

In quieter ways.

“I didn’t decide.”

“I wasn’t there.”

“It’s complicated.”

And yet

the harm still unfolds.

The cross is still built.

The nails are still driven.

And innocence does not survive  
our distance from responsibility.

They dress him in a robe.

They press thorns into his skin.

They kneel, laughing

“Hail, King.”

And I think this is where the story becomes almost  
unbearable.

Not because of the violence  
though there is plenty of that

but because of the distortion.

The way truth is twisted into spectacle.

The way dignity is turned into entertainment.

The way power needs to humiliate what it cannot control.

And Jesus does not resist in the way we expect.

He does not reclaim the moment.

He does not correct them.

He remains.

There is strength here that does not look like strength.

A kind of authority that does not announce itself.

A kind of love that refuses to become what it opposes.

And if we are honest

this unsettles us.

Because we have been taught that strength defends itself.

That power proves itself.

That love, if it is real, wins.

But here, love does not win in any way we recognize.

It stays.

They lead him out.

The city still breathing its ordinary rhythms.

People passing by.

People watching.

People shaking their heads.

And I imagine how easy it would have been  
to keep walking.

To not get involved.

To not look too closely.

Because suffering, when it becomes visible,  
asks something of us.

And not everyone wants to be asked.

At the cross, the words keep coming.

“Save yourself.”

It sounds so reasonable.

So logical.

So aligned with everything we have been taught about survival.

But the deeper question beneath it is this

What kind of salvation are we asking for?

One that preserves the self  
or one that transforms the world?

Jesus does not come down.

Not because he cannot  
but because that is not the way.

And then, at noon

darkness.

Not metaphor.

Not mood.

Darkness.

The kind that interrupts the day.  
The kind that makes people pause mid-sentence.  
The kind that says

something is not right.

And into that darkness, a voice

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

There is no neat theology here.

No polished explanation.

Just a cry.

And I think  
perhaps this is where many of us live.

Not in certainty.

Not in clarity.

But in that space where faith and absence  
sit beside each other  
without resolving.

And still

the cry is addressed to God.

Even here.

Especially here.

And then

he breathes his last.

And something tears.

Not only in the temple

though the curtain does split from top to bottom

but in the fabric of how we have understood everything.

The holy is no longer contained.

The distance is no longer protected.

The boundaries are no longer stable.

God is no longer safely behind the curtain.

God is here.

Exposed.

Vulnerable.

Uncontained.

The earth trembles.

The rocks split.

And a soldier

a man whose life has been shaped by orders and outcomes  
looks at what has happened and says

“Truly this man was God’s Son.”

And I find myself wondering

what did he see?

Was it the darkness?

The silence?

The way Jesus died?

Or was it something else

something in the way love refused to become violence  
even when violence was all around it?

And so we arrive here.

Not at the end

but at the threshold.

With palms still in our hands and the shadow of the cross  
already falling across them.

Because this day does not let us choose one story.

It insists we hold both.

The procession

and the execution.

The hope

and the cost of that hope.

And perhaps the question is not only  
what kind of king this is

but what kind of people we are becoming.

Are we the ones who cheer  
when it is easy?

Are we the ones who disappear  
when it becomes costly?

Are we the ones who hand things over  
to the crowd  
to the system  
to someone else?

Or

are we willing to stay?

To witness.

To not turn away.

To let this story tell the truth about the world  
and about us.

Because this is not a story to be admired from a distance.

It is a story that asks to be entered.

Slowly.

Honestly.

Without defence.

So we will not rush past it.

We will not tidy it.

We will not explain it away.

Instead

we will hear it.

In all its weight.

In all its sorrow.

In all its strange, unyielding love.

And as we hear this Passion

this long, aching story of betrayal and courage, of violence  
and love

I invite you not just to listen  
but to notice.

Where you find yourself in it.

Where it unsettles you.

Where it calls you.

This is the Passion and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus  
Christ, according to St. Matthew, the 27th chapter...