

# Love Among Friends

Thomas Robinson, Palm Sunday, March 28, 2010

John 12:12-16

<sup>12</sup> The next day the **great crowd** that had come for the **festival** heard that **Jesus** was on his way to Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> They took **palm branches** and went out to meet him, shouting,  
**"Hosanna! "**

**"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"** [Ps 118:25]  
**"Blessed is the king of Israel!"**

<sup>14</sup> Jesus found a **young donkey** and sat on it, as it is written:

<sup>15</sup> *"Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;  
see, **your king is coming,**  
seated on a donkey's colt."* [Zech 9:9]

<sup>16</sup> At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only **after Jesus was glorified** did they realize that these things had been **written about him** and that these things had been **done to him**.

John 15:8-17

<sup>8</sup> *"This is to **my Father's glory**, that **you bear much fruit**, and become my **disciples**. <sup>9</sup> **As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.** <sup>10</sup> **If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.** <sup>11</sup> **I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.***

<sup>12</sup> *My **command** is this:*

**Love each other as I have loved you.**

<sup>13</sup> ***Greater love** has no one than this:*

*to **lay down one's life for one's friends.***

<sup>14</sup> ***You are my friends** if you do **what I command.***

<sup>15</sup> *I no longer call you **servants**, because servants do not know their Lord's business. Instead, **I have called you friends**, for everything that I learned from my Father **I have made known to you.***

<sup>16</sup> *You did not choose me, but **I chose you** and appointed you so that you might **go and bear fruit** – fruit **that will last** – and **so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.***

<sup>17</sup> *This is my command: **Love each other.***

Psalms 118:25-27

<sup>25</sup> **LORD, save us!** (*Hoshiah na!*) LORD, grant us success!

<sup>26</sup> **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.**

From the house of the LORD we bless you.

<sup>27</sup> The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine on us.

**With boughs in hand**, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.

## What a Week!

The last days of Jesus' ministry shine with significance. Transition time for the disciples. Turning point for the world. The event of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection is profound, mysterious, complex, paradoxical, bringing into one focus all aspects of human sin, injustice, brokenness, pain; all our hope, transformation, healing, beauty, connection with God.

The disciples are ordinary people like us, moving from tag-along followers of Jesus to transformed participants in Jesus' life, proclaimers and leaders.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem marks the paradox. Jesus is celebrated as king. He takes the role of humble king (Zech 9:9). Still, no one expected a crucified king/God. The week unfolded with teaching, conflicts, threats of arrest. The inquiring Greeks are a sign to Jesus that his hour has come for glorification/lifting up/death.

## Visions to Understand the Mystery of Jesus

Hours before his death, Jesus eats with his disciples -seeing the end, moved by love. He begins giving them a language of experience to take in the unfolding mystery. First, tactile, non-verbal washing feet. Sharing in a serving Lord, accepting him. Predictions of betrayal/denial: one leaves, one remains. Don't be troubled, trust.

He helps the disciples to focus on what they have experienced in Jesus: new categories: I am going to the Father; you know the Way; I am the Way. You have seen the Father in me. I am sending the Advocate/Holy Spirit to be in you. I will come to you. The Father and I will make our home in you. I am drawing you into the divine life: I in the Father; I in you. I give you my Peace, unlike any other.

Like branches on a vine, you share my life/vitality. Remain! Stay with me. I bear fruit through you. My words remain in you. You remain in my love. My joy in you.

## From Servants to Friends

Jesus wants to open their eyes so that they can see his love/God's love in his death. This love is the love within the Godhead, the deepest reality of existence (v. 9). Jesus' one central command: Love each other as I have loved you (as the Father loved me). Radically giving love: Giving Life/soul for friends/the beloved. Not only in death but in living for them, with them. Jesus gives life on all levels.

Jesus summons the disciples to a new level of relationship: He calls us friends and shares the secrets from the heart of divine existence: profound love: God is love. We don't cease to be servants: we are his creatures; he is God. But he embraces his creatures in love. That's why he made us in his likeness, for this relationship. For God, this love is natural. For us, we need practice, loving each other.

## Chosen for a Continuing Relationship

This relationship is begun and empowered by Jesus, not us. Jesus chooses. He loves, he dies, he gives life. But he has a purpose. He prunes us so we can bear fruit - the lasting fruit Jesus makes possible. God will join with us in that enterprise.

Don't forget! Don't think it's too simple. Live it out every day. Give your life for others. Make them your friends, as God has made you: Love one another!