



As my friend and pastor Kelly Nelson of Christ Lutheran say, this is “Whip-Saw Sunday.” In less than one hour – indeed in less than ½ hour! - we go from “Hosanna! Blessed be the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” to “Crucify him. Crucify him.” It fits right in with our contemporary society where the average attention span keeps getting shorter and shorter.

Before we really even have much of a chance to celebrate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, we are the crowd crying for mob justice – we want the spectacle of trial, of debasement with a crown of thorns pushed so deep into the skin that blood runs down, to watching morbidly while a man dies a painful death for daring to call us into a new way of being.

It’s a set-up: one day riding high on the crowd’s adulation and the next being arrested and sentenced to die – and for what? For asking us to love one another. Is that a crime? Why do we take so much pleasure in seeing someone brought so low?

Today, perhaps fueled in part by what’s offered so much on media, we seem to take a great deal of pleasure- or at least are interested in – why and how people fall from grace. But why is it we sing out “Crucify him! Crucify him!” when we don’t even know the one brought up on charges? Is the message of Jesus truly so difficult for us? Unfortunately, then and now, the answer appears to be “yes.”

Perhaps part of the answer is that as human beings we have a hard time accepting that God truly does love each one of us because that means that you and I and the person living on the street are all equal in God’s eyes. We say we believe in equality, but do we really when it means that we are not one on top of the heap? There seems to be something about us as humans that we want to be the one on top. We want to be special.

The sadness of today is that we are special – but each one of us is special in God’s eyes. No one of us is more special than any other. That’s the sticking point, isn’t it? Just like a child asking a parent: do you love me? Do you love me more than my brother? I’m your favorite, aren’t I? And the parent responds: I love each one of you. And we adults know how that is. Yes, I love each child- differently and independently but differently. And sometimes that isn’t enough for us.

Jesus rides into town on a donkey with hosannas and waving palm branches this morning. He leaves us today having been arrested, tried and tormented and crucified. As we read and hear the Gospel, put yourself into the crowd. Why are you part of the mob? What brought you out to see this man Jesus abused and put to death? What, in your life, have you celebrated only to turn on it and put it away from you? Where are you in this Gospel?