

Matthew 16:13-27
(Psalm 49:7-15; James 4:6-10)
“His Cross, and Ours”

Introduction

By calling this day both Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday, the Church of Jesus Christ acknowledges the tension present on that first Palm Sunday: as the crowds welcomed Jesus and cheered him on his way, he knew that he was riding to his death, a death he entered history to face, because only in his death could we have life. All the way to Jerusalem, Jesus repeatedly warned his disciples that when they reached Jerusalem, he would be arrested and put to death, yet all the way to Jerusalem, his disciples argued over which one of them would be greatest when Jesus entered Jerusalem and took the throne of David. They simply refused to hear and heed their Master’s words of warning, and all these centuries later, we too are in danger of failing to hear and heed that same warning given to us through his Word.

So this morning, we will go back to the moment when Jesus turned his face toward Jerusalem and began to try to prepare his disciples for what was coming, because in this account we find one of the clearest descriptions of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, and so have hope of sharing in his resurrection victory.

Body

1. Confessing Jesus (16:13-19):

The church is built upon this confession (16:16-18).

The mission is pursued through this confession (16:19).

2. Hearing and Heeding Jesus (16:20):

What does Jesus mean by warning them not to tell anyone that he is the Christ?

3. Following Jesus (16:21-27):

We must accept the absolute necessity of Christ’s cross (16:21-23).

We must accept the absolute necessity of our cross (16:24-27).

Conclusion

Those who confess Jesus but do not follow him do the greatest damage to the mission of the church. But when we confess him and seek, in the strength that he supplies, to follow him, he unleashes his power and turns the world upside-down.

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