

24 March 2024
Palm Sunday / Sunday of the Passion

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

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“This Man”

Text: John 12:12-19; Mark 14-15; Philippians 2:5-11

And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way [Jesus] breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

We’ll hear that read in just a few moments now.

About this man who entered Jerusalem to the shouts of Hosanna.

This man who dined with the poor, and lepers, and sinners.

This man who was betrayed by His own.

This man was the Son of God.

This man who celebrated the Passover with His disciples, transforming it first by His words, and then by his death, to a new meal, a new food.

This man who told his closet disciples he would deny Him three times.

This man who prayed, alone, in sorrow and distress.

This man was the Son of God.

This man who was treated as a dangerous criminal.

This man who was kissed not by a kiss of love but of betrayal.

This man who would not defend Himself and was abandoned by all.

This man was the Son of God.

This man who was accused by false witnesses.

This man who only confessed who He truly was.

This man who was convicted of blasphemy for speaking the truth.

This man was the Son of God.

This man who mocked, spit on, and struck by the soldiers.

This man who was on trial but charged with no crime.

This man who was traded for a murderer and insurrectionist.

This man was the Son of God.

This man who was scourged.

This man who was robed in a purple cloak and crowned with thorns.

This man who once again was struck and spit on and mocked and shamed.

This man was the Son of God.

This man who bore His own cross but stumbled under its weight.
This man who was stripped of His garments.
This man who was nailed to a cross.
This man was the Son of God.

This man who was then taunted and derided by all who passed by and saw Him hanging
in shame.
This man who was scorned by the chief priests and scribes.
This man who could have saved Himself, but did not.
This man was the Son of God.

This man on whom the sun refused to shine for three hours.
This man who was forsaken by God.
This man who was given sour wine to drink.
This man was the Son of God.

This man who uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.
This man whose lifeless body was then taken down from the cross.
This man who was laid in a tomb.
This man was the Son of God.

This man who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.
This man who made Himself nothing.
This man who was perfectly obedient, even to the point of death.
This man was the Son of God.

This Son of God did this all *for you*.

Who else has given so much for you?
Who else loves you like this?
Who else knows all your worst, and gives you His best?
Who else, but ***the Son of God.***

And what does He ask of you, O Christian?
Things equally great? Equal in magnitude to this?
Or just to love Him.
And to love your neighbor.
To honor Him as holy with your life.
To pray and give Him thanks.
To help and care for others.
Is this too much for us?
Taking a look at your life, my life . . . apparently so.
O wretched men and women we are.

So where is your cross?

It is here.

This man is on it.

The Son of God.

For He could not bear to see you on it.

So on it *He* hung.

For you.

In your place.

With your sin, the disciples' sin, Pilate's sin, the chief priests' and scribes' sin, the soldiers sin, *all* sin.

That all may live.

For now, God has highly exalted Him.

God has bestowed on Him the name that is above every name.

To Him every knee will bow and every confess.

For He is not dead, but alive!

Risen from the tomb in which Joseph laid Him.

So we do not confess with the centurion, ***Truly this man was the Son of God!***

No. Our confession is different.

So we confess, **Truly this man is the Son of God!**

This man who now forgives your sins.

This man who baptizes and washes sinners clean.

This man who feeds us with His own Body and Blood.

This man is the Son of God!

This man who gives us His Spirit.

This man who has brought you here today.

This man who is seated in glory, yet still serving sinners in His love.

This man is the Son of God!

This man who is all knowing, but remembers *your* sin no more.

This man who is all present, but puts Himself here for you.

This man who is all powerful, but uses His power not to punish but to save.

This man is the Son of God!

This man who has promised to come again for you to take you home.

This man who bids you depart in peace.

This man who has put His Name on you and proclaimed, *you are mine.*

This man is the Son of God!

Your God. Your Lord. Your Saviour.

So now we will hear all this.

Today, and all this week.

The account of His Passion.

His passion, which means His suffering.

But this passion is because of His passion for you.

That is the why.

Why He does all this.

Though it make no sense.

Yet it is true.

And so worthy for us to ponder.

Yes, Jesus, I will ponder now, on your holy passion (LSB #440).