

Palm Sunday

March 28, 2021

John 12:12-19

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

An NPR reporter recently asked Twitter followers to use the hashtag #**TheMoment** to share where they were and what they were doing nearly one year ago when they realized they were now living in a pandemic.

Many responses included photos of individuals grocery shopping amidst empty shelves – as pandemonium led to shelves with no canned goods, not a shred of toilet paper to be found, and a void where cleaning products used to exist in excess.

For others, #**TheMoment** was when the classrooms went empty, and teachers were forced to package their students' belongings into bags to be gathered by parents. One at a time, parents collected those belongings at school as they determined how to divide their attention between work and ensuring their children completed their studies.

Yet, for others, the moment was more profound as the government ordered distance between people, caused isolation and the cruel loss of human touch.

A year later, we come to conclusion differently from one another and have the ability to evaluate our leaders' decisions and initial guidance. But, doesn't this miss a far more critical point in the greater aspect of life?

We are a dying people, not just from this world, but the sin inherited from our first parents – it continues to infect us even more than the coronavirus itself - or any disease - and the greater risk is the loss of eternal life.

In reality, you don't need a hashtag to recall life-altering events, life is full of these moments...

You can still remember the time when a friend uttered such hurtful words to you on a playground; you vowed never to be friends again. You still remember the conversation when your first love spoke the sad words, "*I don't love.*" You still remember the sadness when you arrived home or received the dreaded phone call informing you that your loved one has died.

So, what is #**TheMoment** that caused the crowds to gather and flock to Jesus? It was another death. It was the death of His friend Lazarus. This is the event that occurs just before the Triumphal Entry in John's Gospel.

Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, are bound in tears and sadness. You can relate to this sadness. You become immovable and, in some instances, paralyzed in time. While your life calls you to continue, your mind remains at the grave with death.

Through all of this grief, you begin to wonder if things will return to normal, or whether someone will simply call you from this dirge and give you back your life?

Why did Jesus make Mary and Martha wait on Him?

He does so to reveal He weeps with them. He shares their sadness and their life. And ultimately, He permits the corpse of Lazarus to lay in waiting – to begin rigor mortis and the decaying process to reveal His power over death. That in Him, the power of resurrection resides. That He answers the pleas of God's children not at the time of our choosing, but at the right time and according to His will.

But what does the raising of Lazarus have to do with today?

It is #**TheMoment** that causes a stir among the crowds, captures their hearts, and inspires their voices. By calling Lazarus out of the grave and calling him to life, the people are led to line the streets and say,

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”

The crowds are led to line the streets and follow He, who is the resurrection of the dead.

The end of the Gospel from John says, *“The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ‘You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!’”*

What have you gone after this past year? What has led you in this life? If it is not the Lord of life, then repent and return to the only Son of the Father. Join the crowds going after Jesus in saying,

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”

Hosanna: Save us now! Come and help us.

If your lips have been absent of these words, then place them there now. Sing with the all the saints in the Sanctus in preparation for the Supper, *“Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.”*

Life is full instances where we misplace our trust, when our words mock the fears and concerns of neighbors, and when we begrudge the crosses God places upon us.

Yet, the cross is where this week takes us. #**TheMoment** in time when Christ Jesus lays down His life and saves you from your sins. Jesus is *“the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.”* (John 1:29)

This is why He came, to help and to save you.

Where do we go and what do we do now?

Our lives are full of many moments when we are left sad, full of rage, or quite honestly feeling the bands of death tighten within us.

During these periods and moments in time, remember the word "*Hosanna.*"

Save us now! Come and help us, dear Jesus!

This Palm Sunday, depart, join the crowds, and go after Jesus - be led in the way of Him who is the resurrection and the life. +INJ+

*The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Amen.*