

# Palm Sunday: Emulate Christ

April 5, 2020 Pastor Katie Matson-Daley

## Recap

For the past six weeks we've been working our way through Tom Berlin's book *Reckless Love* and each week we've been reflecting on what it means to love God more deeply by loving our neighbor as ourselves. Each week starts with a letter that spells out B-E L-O-V-E

So the first week we talked about ***Begin with love*** and we asked what would it look like if every morning we woke up with the task of beginning with love in everything we do and say? Then the next week our theme was ***Expand the circle*** and in worship we talked about expanding the circle of our friends and family to include people who are different than us in significant ways, and in our study groups we talked about how guilt and shame are like rubber bands around our own hearts that keep us from loving ourselves well, so we want to remove guilt and shame from our lives so that we can expand the circle to include love for ourselves. The next week was our first week of digital church, but we continued the series with ***Lavish Love*** and we talked about how lavish can be an adjective, but it can also be a verb, and how God is lavish with God's love for us, but we can lavish love on other people. Then we talked about ***Openhearted Love*** and we brought out a laundry agitator, and how when our hearts are open to other people it can be agitating, but it is through that agitation that we are made holy. Then last week we talked about ***Value the Vulnerable***. We talked about how vulnerable people are valuable to God and to us, and how we may be feeling vulnerable in this time. Jesus invited lots of vulnerable people to the table. Not just as recipients of charity, but as valuable contributors to the kingdom of God. Which brings us to our last phrase in the series which is ***Emulate Christ***.

## Emulate Christ

Emulate is an unusual word. It means to copy. Our mission as a church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We usually think about that word disciple as someone who studies the teachings of someone, but the reality is that a disciple is so much more than a teacher. A disciple is someone who imitates their teacher. So as disciples of Jesus Christ, our work is to copy Jesus Christ, to emulate Christ. To emulate Christ means that every aspect of our life, our working, our parenting, our commuting, our studying, our shopping, our eating, our sleeping, everything in our life should be an imitation, and emulation of Jesus.

We are kicking off Holy Week this morning, we're starting with Palm Sunday, and even though our palm processional was a little bit silly because it was on PowerPoint and not in person, there's a lot of joy in this service. People are shouting out, "Hosanna, save us!" We know what that feels like this year don't we? This is a different kind of Palm Sunday, people today are sick, anxious and scared and we like the people in Jerusalem are calling out, "hosanna, save us." And here comes Jesus, the king of kings and lord of lords, humble and riding on a donkey.

And not only that, but as he goes on through the week he will pour himself out in love and servanthood. He will wash his disciple's feet, even one who is just about to betray him. He will break bread and share it with his friends who will deny him and run away from him. He will go to the garden and pray and he will be in agony and his friends will fall asleep, but he LOVES them, so he continues to pray. He'll be arrested, he'll be tried and condemned and nailed to the cross, and he will die.

Every aspect of Jesus' life is an act of sacrificial love, it's an act of generosity, of emptying out, of humility and service.

Sometimes as Christians we think that what we need to do is schedule times of service, "I'm going to serve at the food shelf next week." It's good to schedule times to serve. But to be a disciple is not to follow Jesus is not to copy Jesus a couple times a week, or to follow Jesus even a couple of times a day, but to follow him so closely that everything in our life is transformed by Holy love.

And that is hard, it is really hard to have every aspect of our life transformed into Jesus' likeness.

But that's part of the point. Because if we could do this on our own, we would not need a God who went to the cross. If we could do this on our own we wouldn't need the Holy Spirit. Because when we call out "Hosanna, Save us!" Jesus is there, and this is the good news. He says to us, I love you lavishly, and I know you are vulnerable, and I value you. You are worthy, you are loved, you are mine.

We know that good news is coming. We know that even though there is a death coming on Friday there is a resurrection on Sunday, and God's grace is sufficient for us. Amen.