

Sermon Notes – March 24, 2024
The Holy Gospel of St. Mark 11: 1-11, 15: 1-47
Peace Lutheran Church
“Shouts of Glory and Then Left to Die...Oh the Contrast!”

We are inundated with words this day. We are immersed in the Word that does not go forth without accomplishing its purpose (Isa. 55: 11). The purpose of the Word this day is to draw us ever deeper into our baptismal death and resurrection with Jesus, so that we may live again with Christ's mind and walk in His way of self-giving love and solidarity with all who are forsaken, with victims of violence and war, with all who hurt, grieve and grope for some semblance of “the life that really is life” (1 Tim. 6: 19).

Today we are immersed in the baptism with which Jesus came to be baptized. It is the baptism of James and John, those ancient seekers of place and power (Mark 10: 35-45). It is our baptism as well. This is the baptism in which the kingdom of imperial domination, and the kingdom of suffering, solidarity and service to others, collide. The one imposes suffering and death to preserve its place and power; the other goes deep into suffering and death and rises up to offer new, abundant, and lasting life for all.

We are baptized into the reign of the Servant-King whose passion and deep emotion we share this day. This is the Ruler of the Universe who “sustain[s] the weary with a word” (Isa. 50: 4). This is the Messiah who holds divinity loosely to embrace humanity fully. This is the one to whom our knees bow in daily baptismal rhythm of dying to a reign that seeks to diminish, dismiss, and dominate. We rise in grace to live in the reign of the servant Christ, the one whom God has highly exalted over all others (Phil. 2: 6-11).

This is the preacher's task, my task today - to point toward, open up, and serve this world amid all the words, that it may transform those who gather in desperate hope for new life, for a new world, and to be set free in forgiveness, solidarity, and self-giving love, with the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus.