

## Matthew 21: 1-11, 27: 11-54 Palm/Passion Sunday

## “Taking It Lying Down”

In mere \_\_\_ minutes, we’ve witnessed how the last week of Jesus’s earthly life unfolded, from the joyous entrance into Jerusalem to the cross. It is also the story of how the life of his followers unfolded during the same course of the week, the excited crowds as well as his disciples.

The crowds who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem with shouts of joy, throwing their own cloaks and branches in the manner of welcoming the royal king had it right. They were right when they declared Jesus was a prophet and that Jesus was their king, Son of David. Hosanna, means “Save us!” Jesus was their Savior, the Messiah they had been waiting for.

More than that, Jesus was the embodiment of the Love of God, the Perfect Love that has delivered Israel out of the bondage of Egypt and kept loving them no matter how many times they turned away, rejecting the prophets God sent time and again. Now, it is Passover, when Jesus’s own people, came to Jerusalem to celebrate God’s deliverance of them out of slavery in Egypt. What would they do to this prophet?

Within a week, they would more than turn their backs on Jesus, demanding his life, calling for his death, on the cross.

What happened?

At around the same time Jesus was entering Jerusalem, there was another procession into the city from the other side. The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, was coming to the city to keep the peace, his way, during the potentially riotous days of the Jewish festival of Passover. Since it was now the Roman Empire who had the Jewish people under its thumb.

The leaders of Jesus’s own people, jealous and threatened by Jesus’s authority that comes from his authenticity as God’s Perfect Love made flesh,

manage to lead the crowds astray. And in the face of threats from the power that be, even his closest disciples leave Jesus, betraying him. Such is the imperfect Love of those whom Jesus loved perfectly.

As the chief priests and the leaders incite the misguided crowds to push him closer to the cross, and as the cowardly and opportunistic Roman governor refuses to act to stop the injustice that he knows it to be, Jesus remains silent, as if to take it all lying down.

But not out of weakness or cowardliness. He endures even the deepest and the bitterest despair of being abandoned by his God. He lets the brutality and cruelty play out to the max. On the cross, the Perfect Love absorbs our Imperfect Love acting out at its worst.

I wondered what Jesus was thinking and feeling, riding on the donkey through the excited crowds, knowing they would all soon leave him? We know what he did in this crucial time between his entry into the city until his death on the cross, which we now call the Holy Week. Jesus kept loving them all the same. Jesus kept teaching them all the same. As we move through the Holy Week, we will see how Jesus loved his disciples to the end. Come and see.