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April 17, 2011

Palm/Passion Sunday

Matthew 21: 1-11

From Glory to Death

(this message is short because it follows the Choir's part of the word---a cantata telling the story of Christ's final days leading up to and including the crucifixion)

And this is where we leave it for today---Christ is dead, sealed in a tomb behind a huge stone.

His followers have gone home. They didn't even have time to anoint his body for burial before the Sabbath began. And they are in fear for their own lives as well, hiding behind closed doors.

This week is not that difficult for us because we already know next part of the story, but imagine how that time felt to Jesus' disciples! The man they had followed for three years, the one they had seen perform so many miracles, who had taught them and so many others about God, the one they believed was the Messiah!

Was dead and buried, killed by the government like a common criminal.

And they might be next.

They didn't know there was going to be any more to the story.

All they knew was that Jesus was dead and sealed up in the tomb.

All they knew was that someone they loved was gone--- someone who had taught them what God is like, who had shown them what love is, who had said that he was the living water, the bread of life, the light of the world.

And it must have seemed like the end.

The end of their hopes, their dreams, their amazing journey.

And they didn't understand yet what it was all about.

Jesus suffered and died to show us how much God loves us, to show us that God is with us in our suffering, to prove that God will never leave us or forsake us.

He lived to show us how to live----in love and relationship with our neighbors, and in a strong and loving relationship with God, the creator of all things.

And he showed us how to die, without fighting back, accepting that all people must die, taking the worst that humankind has to dish out, and still maintaining his integrity, not running away.

And we know what happens next-----

This week spend time reflecting on the great and powerful love of God, a love that sent Christ to be God incarnate, God with us.

A love that went through pain and suffering and death so that we can know the next part of the story.

As you consider the great sacrifice that Christ made to prove God's love for us, be grateful.

Turn back to God once again, and accept the grace that is offered to you without reservation.

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God loves you. Let that soak into your heart this week.

This week is Holy Week. And we are leaving worship today in a sad and dark mood, thinking of Christ in that stone-sealed tomb.

It's dark today, but Easter's coming!

Amen!