

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran  
Church  
Sermon by Pastor Anthony  
E. Schultz  
Palm Sunday  
Hebrews 12:1-3 WELS Series B.  
April 9, 2017**



12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.


Children of our Heavenly Father, precious in His sight for Jesus' sake:

I read the other day about a man named Mark – just 33 years old – from Rhode Island. I don't know anybody from Rhode Island. I saw a picture of Mark. He has hair much longer than mine. *Not that there's anything wrong with that.* I learned a very long time ago you cannot judge a book by the cover – nor a person according to any aspect of their physical appearance! Mark has glasses like mine – with little grey wires around them. He was wearing one of those orange vests – like construction workers – with like duct tape that reflects. I saw Mark's bare feet which look pretty average! Mark determined to walk bare foot across the United States. Apparently he walked across the country – wearing shoes – in about 81 days. So – this time bare

foot. He got to Ohio where it was snowing – so he regrouped and started over in Florida. He walks literally on the highway – on the white paint – the stripe on the edge of the highway – usually a smooth strip – then comes the gravel. Mark walks into the traffic – so he can see traffic coming toward him and hopefully they can see him. Mark was walking about a quarter past 1 in the afternoon – when an SUV slipped off the road – onto the gravel shoulder and struck Mark. He was dead at the scene. The person driving the SUV was 51 years old. Alcohol was not a factor! Yikes! How did that happen? I mean – I don't get it! I have walked beside the street – toward traffic. And when I see someone coming – I move over – in the gravel – over – into the weeds – over – into the ditch – over – onto whatever comes after the ditch! I have said many times before – *people are breakable!* And if it's a contest between a breakable person and an SUV – the SUV always wins! *People are very breakable* – physically – mentally – emotionally and most importantly of all – spiritually. That's why this Palm Sunday God's Word encourages us:

### **Run With Jesus!**

- I. **Throw off everything that hinders**
- II. **Do not grow weary or lose heart!**

Where did Lent go? It seems like it was just the other day that it was Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. It was snowing! We had Church at 4 and 7 with Lord's Supper. We had purple on the huge cross in front of Church – and the lectern was replaced for the 26<sup>th</sup> time in a row with the Christmas tree . We had supper downstairs. You carry your food on a tray to where you are going to eat and little people come quickly to take your tray back. I have said before – when we got married 39 ½ years ago – that was the hardest thing to get used to – not eating off an orange tray! **Repent! Repent!**

That is what we heard again! By the power of the Holy Spirit – through the Scriptures we repent – we turn around – away from all that is sinful and hurtful and wrong – we turn to Jesus the Lamb of God who went uncomplaining forth to bear the sin of the whole world!

Today is Palm Sunday! There are some Lectionaries – where today can also be called Passion Sunday. Did you know that? *Passion Sunday* – the Gospel reading is Mark chapters 14 and 15! Jesus anointed at Bethany, the Last Supper, Gethsemane, Jesus' Trial, Crucifixion and burial – the Passion History for Passion Sunday. We could have done that. It wouldn't be wrong – but I talked it over and think people would say, "What happened to Palm Sunday?"

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on for Palm Sunday is part of the Letter to the Hebrews! The Letter to the Hebrews is one of comparisons. Angels are incredible. Isaiah talks about angels with 6 wings – flawless and without sin – and incapable of falling away – still in powerful humility they cover their eyes, they cover their feet. They hover nearby to serve their Heavenly Father. As wondrous as they are – they cannot begin to compare with Jesus. There is no one in all of Scripture quite like Moses – who knew the Great I AM – face to face. Imagine the Red Sea parting before him. Imagine receiving the Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone – written with the very finger of God! Imagine hiding in the cleft in the rock – then the LORD passing by woosh! And then from there you catch a glimpse of God's glory – and your face is lit with unbearable brightness! Again nothing compared to Jesus – the eternal Son of God. The Sabbath Rest for the People of God was a wonderful thing – rest from their labors – as they found rest for their souls in the Scriptures – the shadows of the ultimate rest that Jesus would

win – when He died and rose from the dead! The High Priest – who went into the Most Holy Place – by the Ark of the Covenant – to sprinkle blood – first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. Jesus is the Lamb of God – who would take away the sins of the world! Melchizedek was prophet, priest and king in ways we cannot understand. Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords – the Priest and the sacrifice – the Word of God made flesh to redeem us! Morning, noon and night – animals were sacrificed in the Tabernacle and then in the Temple – guilt offerings and sin offerings and whole burnt offerings and fellowship offerings – bulls and rams and lambs and turtle doves died – scape goats died – until the ultimate Lamb died once for all – for the sins of all people of all time!

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us... The writer to the Hebrews writes in chapter 11 – the heroes of faith chapter--<sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. <sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated –

<sup>38</sup> the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

<sup>39</sup> These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. Do you ever wonder why am I(you) so blessed? I don't mean just the little things like – I remember when phones were on cords – maybe you had one of those really long cords in the kitchen so your mom could talk on the phone and at the same time – get stuff out of the refrigerator and make supper and put stuff on the dinner table with that long cord? Remember when they first invented cordless phones and people thought wow! And now you can do Internet stuff on your phone – take pictures – text and film video and gps directions and ask SIRI questions? Why am I so blessed to see how all the Old Testament prophecies worked out? Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David and Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel never went to church on Palm Sunday, nor Maundy Thursday nor Good Friday nor Easter nor Ascension! They never saw how this all worked out the way we have! Why am I so blessed – as to see God's love so plain and simple and clear?

<sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. What do pastors do all day? One thing we do – is visit people in the hospital or people in nursing homes – people in hospice care! It is not easy when you live to be over 90 years. King Solomon wrote in the book of Ecclesiastes – the Preacher/the Teacher. King Solomon made wise by his Heavenly Father wrote about growing old. He wrote:  
12 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them" –<sup>2</sup> before the sun and the

light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; <sup>3</sup> when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim; <sup>4</sup> when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when people rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint; <sup>5</sup> when people are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags itself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then people go to their eternal home and mourners go about the streets.

Ecclesiastes 11 Just one of the blessings of visiting shut-ins with all the troubles that come from old age – is to hear them say they fix their eyes on Jesus. And then when the things and stuff of this world fail and frustrate them – they are not discouraged. I visited Martin the other day – and he marveled again and again – and how much Jesus loves him and loves me – so we are not discouraged. Imagine all the frustrations Jesus endured – because of sinful people all around him – and still Jesus was not discouraged and so for Jesus’ sake we will not despair either!

<sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus. Fix your eyes on the finish line – the goal of our faith – to spend eternity with Jesus! When I was in High School one of my friends – Doug was a foreign exchange student. He studied abroad – studied in South Africa. After school they would have races. How far? I don’t know. They would see a shrub – a tree – something sticking out of the ground – some unspecified “thing” and run to it. How far did they run? Nobody knew – it didn’t matter – just run till you get there. Then – run back to where you left your books! My friend could run and run and run. When he came home he was on our track team. He ran the mile. He always won – always – always! He would begin running – very fast. Everyone said, “What a

dufus! Pace yourself!” But my friend ran and ran and ran. Pretty soon he caught up to the pack – what you call – he lapped them! Then they all became discouraged and my friend ran and ran and ran. He fixed his eyes on the finish line – and he never lost ♥. And when he crossed the finish line he would run another lap just for fun. He ran and ran and did not become discouraged. Run like that in life. Fix your eyes on Jesus and run!

**<sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus.** Pay attention! Concentrate! I remember when I was much younger – watching older people watching TV – or watching a play at the Fireside – or going to a movie – or sitting in Church – especially at mid-week Lent or Advent – after working hard – milking cows – and eating a quick supper – and coming to church and when the sermon started they would turn down the lights – and people would fall asleep. I remember thinking Yikes~how can you fall asleep sitting there. I can do that now. But when it comes to our faith and our soul we need to wake up! Wake up to the spiritual dangers all around us! I was on jury duty this past week. I was *very* sure I would be told, “Pastor Schultz, thanks for coming in today – bless your ministry – you can go home now!” But I wasn’t. It is an amazing thing when they tell you, “Raise your right hand – do you promise to listen carefully to all the evidence and then to render a fair and just verdict?” “I do!” It is a very different feeling to realize I am going to listen to witnesses – the victim – the defendant – and then though God’s Word says do not judge another person’s heart – that is not what you are doing! You are judging who is telling the truth! You are using common sense to decide is there enough evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doing or not! It’s about common sense and the burden of proof beyond a reasonable doubt. You have time to think. And I thought about my Savior – about my guilt – about the fact that

my Heavenly Father has declared me not guilty – not guilty for Jesus' sake!

**<sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus!** When I was part way through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade we moved from south/central Illinois – by Peoria – to Northern Illinois – to a place called West Chicago – formerly known as Turner Junction. Turner Junction was a criss/cross of railroad tracks. Trains went through Turner Junction morning, noon and night. It was common for people to walk across and even along the tracks. Today walking along the tracks is very technically called railroad trespassing! You dasn't walk the tracks! It was a little while ago – that a mom and her little son were walking on a railroad trestle – stopping, standing, throwing rocks over the side. All of a sudden – here came a train. The mommy ran and quickly scooped up her son. Now what? There was only a moment to decide. The mom stood on the edge of the tracks – holding her son over the side of the trestle! The train struck the mom and she dropped her son over the edge some 35 to 40 feet down – into about 6" of water. The angels caught the little boy and he survived. The mommy died – without complaint to save her son. God the Father sacrificed His one and only Son – to save us from all our sins. How great is the love God the Father has lavished on us that we should be called the children of God – by grace through faith for Jesus' sake? Jesus died and rose again – so that we might have everlasting life! That's why we sing Jesus' praises – Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, too! Amen!

To God alone all glory!



*Pastor Tony Schultz*