

## Interactive lesson



*picture from class on psalms  
taught by Denise Dombkowski  
Hopkins; artist credit: Chris  
Suerdick*

In my latest Course of Study class, we talked about emotional phases of our faith. We began in the orientation phase, feeling comfortable and in control of where we were. Which of the figures in this picture do you think represents that, and why?

<Let them respond>

We talked about when tragedy strikes and disrupts our lives, something that throws us into disorientation. Which of the figures in this picture do you think represents that, and why? <Let them respond>

Finally, we talked about new orientation – not reorientation, getting back to where we were, but **new** orientation – having worked through our pain, grief, etc., we relate to God and others differently. Which of the figures in this picture do you think represents that, and why? <Let them respond>

Of these three orientations, where do you think you are today, and why? <Let them respond>

Where do you think Jesus was in this picture during Holy Week? <Let them respond>

Do you think the disciples were in the same positions at the same time as Jesus? <Let them respond>

God understands where we are at, not just because He sees it, but because He underwent those emotions Himself, and because He walks in the midst of it with us every day. Jesus got very emotional during His final week before the crucifixion, and expressed it. May each of us find in Jesus's experiences the room to share our emotions with God, that we too may find release, healing, and renewal to new orientations in body, mind, and soul.

### **Gospel lesson**

We transition now from the triumphant entry into Jerusalem to the beginning of Christ's passion. I encourage everyone to come to the Tenebrae service on Friday for the full passion story, that you may get a greater sense of the stunning changes experienced over the course of the holy week.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/last-supper/>

**Luke 22:14-18,24-27,31b-32,35,39-46(NRSV)**

<sup>14</sup>When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him.

<sup>15</sup>He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;

<sup>16</sup>for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

<sup>17</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves;

<sup>18</sup>for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

<sup>24</sup>A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest.

<sup>25</sup>But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors.

<sup>26</sup>But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves.

<sup>27</sup>For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

<sup>31b</sup> Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat,

<sup>32</sup>but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

<sup>35</sup>He said to them, "When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "No, not a thing."

<sup>39</sup>He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him.

<sup>40</sup>When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

<sup>41</sup>Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed,

<sup>42</sup>"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done."

<sup>43</sup>Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength.

<sup>44</sup>In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.

<sup>45</sup>When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief,

<sup>46</sup>and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn "Were You There">

UMH #288 vv.1-2>

## Message: The Lord Needs It



*pictures from* <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/gathered-up-in-jesus>

Jesus died.

Please pray with me?

Almighty God who humbled yourself

even to death on the cross for our sakes,  
as we take time now to further consider today's  
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may find life in You through humble service  
to Your world. Amen.



*picture from* <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/gathered-up-in-jesus/palm-passion-sunday-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/palm-passion-sunday-year-c-graphics>

In this final week of our sermon series, “The Lord Needs It” is the theme for today:

“Here we are again. We are on the brink of the remembrance of the central event of our faith.

Holy Week and Easter shape our understanding of who we are as followers of Jesus Christ more than any other single event.

We are, as others have said, Easter people living in a Good Friday world. We are defined by this sacrifice and by this gift of eternity. And it all begins with Palm Sunday.”

Hosannah!



picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-mother-and-son-baking-in-the-kitchen-4941812/>

When my son was little, he liked chocolate chip cookies. He did not **need** cookies – and neither did I – for we had healthy meals to eat. But I wanted something on hand as dessert for those meals and I knew he would enjoy it, so I asked him to help me as I started to get things ready for baking cookies.

With everything laid out on the counter and our hands washed, I had him help me:

“Unwrap the stick of butter and put it in the bowl.”

“Hold the measuring cup still while I pour into it.”

“Pour the white sugar into the bowl.”

“Pack down the brown sugar.”

...and so on.

By the time we were putting cookies in the oven, bits of ingredients were scattered around the counter and dough on his clothes, and somehow a smear of chocolate was on his cheek. He did not mind; he kept helping, right up until he got a couple of the cookies and I asked, "Tell me, how do they taste?"

A muffled mouthful of "Good!" and he was off, leaving me to clean up the mess. *sigh* To bake those cookies, did I need for him to do those things for me? No. Could he do those things better than I could? No. Would I have made the cookies without his help? Yes.

So why did I ask him to help me with it? Because in sharing experiences, we grow closer in love. It also helped him learn how to bake for himself. And he could tell his father how he was a good helper.

Leading up to His entry into Jerusalem, the disciples had served Jesus and seen Him do miraculous things. Convinced that He was the Messiah, they thought the people should praise Him (and maybe give them some recognition too as His right-hand men).

I always find it interesting to ponder how the disciples were so much like people today. At the meal we hear how vain they were, each wanting to be best, only to prove undependable in the garden when they fell asleep instead of doing what Jesus had asked.



picture screencaptured from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLOSiWSwf04> (LUMO)

Yet Jesus, knowing what was coming before they even entered Jerusalem, asked them to help Him set up the parade and praises by getting a donkey.

Did Jesus need their help and praise? No; if the disciples had been silent, the stones would have shouted. God's purposes would be fulfilled whether His instructions were accepted (as the disciples and the donkey's owners did) or rejected (as the Pharisees did).

And like me in the kitchen after my son got his cookies, Jesus had to clean up the mess. At the dinner, He pointed out to the disciples that He was serving them, keeping them safe; they did not lack anything when He sent them out to preach about God.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-gethsemane/>

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus went through great emotional anguish, His sweat like great drops of blood falling to the ground while the disciples slept. Paul wrote to the Philippians that Jesus took



the form of a slave, humbling Himself to the point of death on a cross, and was exalted by God for it.

So if Jesus could save all people without the disciples' help, why involve them? Because in sharing experiences, Jesus and the disciples grew closer in love. It also helped them learn how to minister in His name better themselves. And they could tell their heavenly Father how they were good helpers.

And in knowing the disciples and Jesus shared experiences, people and God grow closer in love - we grow closer to God.

It made possible successive generations each helping the next to learn how to live in God's love themselves - it enables us to learn that.

All followers of Christ - we, as followers of Christ - can tell our heavenly Father how we have been good helpers.

God does not "need", but rather serves our needs that we may live. We are called to life by serving others, that united in God's love we may have abundant life.



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*picture from class  
on psalms taught by  
Denise Dombkowski Hopkins;  
artist credit: Chris Suerdick*

I really like that the third figure in this picture has arms outstretched and face heavenward. When tragedy hits, it is natural to want to withdraw inward. But I do not think we can recover until we reach outside of ourselves again, until we accept help and guidance from the source of all life.

And just as Jesus sent the disciples to take care of what was needed, we are called by God to address needs in our world today. For your homework this week, reach beyond yourself in love to serve a need you see for someone around you – and give thanks to God that you are ABLE to help! Show God's grace to others: the Lord needs it, that you may live.

*<PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UM BOW p.25)>*

Let us confess our sin against God and our neighbors.

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of you Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name.

Amen.

*<PARDON (from UMH #890)>*

Almighty God have mercy on you,  
forgive all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
strengthen you in all goodness,  
and by the power of the Holy Spirit  
keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

*<Doxology>*

*<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>*

Let us pray:

Triumphant God, we echo the shouts of "Hosanna!" as we relive the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and all that waits in the week to come.

Like that first parade so long ago, we may have different ideas of what kind of a messiah we long to welcome.

Many of us seek one who thinks like we think, who will wield power to meet our longings.

As we give our gifts this morning, may we be of the heart and mind of submission.

You know better than us the messiah that is needed for your kingdom to come on earth, as it is in heaven.

Help us to better serve as your agents within our world, that all may know you better.

- Lord, please help {these members of the body of Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and comfort:
  - Jenni Nabor - autoimmune pancreatitis
  - Loree Bishop - kidney removed/cancer recovery
  - Dawn Lavigne - sciatica
  - Kevin Grewe - Parkinsons
  - -
  - -
  - -
- Thanks for
  - Patti Lamandia - continued healing
  - -
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
  - Family far off
  - Travelers
- Lord, please help the people of Ukraine who wander displaced from their homes due to the war.
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
  - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
  - bring world peace

- Guide our Leaders – local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.

All these things we pray as You taught us to pray:

<Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service" UMH #581>

<Benediction>



background picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/gathered-up-in-jesus/palm-passion-sunday-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/palm-passion-sunday-year-c-graphics>

May our awesome God fill you  
with joy, peace, and love  
so that you may abound in grace  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Go into the world proclaiming Christ's glory  
through your words and actions,  
that needs may be met in His precious love  
filling their lives too.  
Amen.