

Interactive lesson



picture from personal creation

What does it mean to make someone's day?

Is it always good for the receiver, that their day was made?

Is it always good for the maker?

Who made the very first day, and all days since then?

In ancient storytelling, a day often represented an event or a non-solar time period. When we talk about God making this day for us, what does it mean to you?

What does it mean to you that God made this Palm/Passion Sunday?

Who cheered Jesus on as He entered Jerusalem?

Who stood with Jesus in His time of trial?

Who called for Jesus to die?

Who did Jesus die for?

Who did Jesus blame for His having to die?

Keeping in mind that Jesus died for each one of us, do you think it is fair to say that God made this day, this Palm/Passion Sunday, for each of us to see and perhaps experience the constancy of divine love amidst the chaos of humanity?

With that cost paid for us to have this day, how are you using it?

May we all seek the Lord with all that we are, for that is what the Lord gave for us to be who we are.

Gospel lesson

We continue now with excerpts from the passion in the Gospel of John.



picture screencaptured from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYHGHS-JRyU>

John 18:19-24, 33-38; 19:1-3, 5-6, 13-19 NRSV

¹⁹ Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.

²⁰ Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret.

²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said."

²² When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

²³ Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high

priest.



picture screencaptured from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lqer4G3iPTo>

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

³⁵ Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

³⁷ Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

³⁸ Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him."

^{19:1} Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.

² And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe.

³ They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face.

⁵ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

⁶ When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him."



picture screencaptured from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQ83jnLhxRQ>

¹³ When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha.

¹⁴ Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!"

¹⁵ They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor."

¹⁶ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.
So they took Jesus;

¹⁷ and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

¹⁹ Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "To Mock Your Reign, O Dearest Lord" UMH #285

Message: This Is the Day



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/in-awe-of-grace/palm-passion-sunday-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/palm-passion-sunday-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Great Maker of all our days,
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 serve You always with gladness and
gratitude in our hearts. Amen.

We begin the Holy Week series “In Awe of Grace” with “This is the Day”:

“This is the day that the Lord has made. For us. Because of us. This week is a divine and human encounter. This day, this slash day, this Palm/Passion Day is the most human day of this whole event.

In some way, both need to be present today—both the declaration and the death, both the parade and the passion. ...[P]eople ... need to hear the whole story, ... need to make the whole journey. This is the only way we can all stand in awe of grace.”



picture from TS collection

On Friday morning while I was drinking my first cup of coffee for the day, I got a call from my daughter-in-law. She started having contractions during the night, and unlike previous false alarms, these did not stop after a little while; rather, they got more intense. They were not heading to the hospital yet, but she wanted to give me a heads up that she might be going to the hospital later to finally give birth.

It made my day. Not so much in the way you would think, because I knew with a first child that labor goes extra long and Vivian would not likely be born

that day. The call got me moving sooner and with a sense of urgency about getting things done for the day. It made my day happier and more productive.

God made this day for us. God created us and essentially told us to flourish, setting up a relationship with us – which humans promptly broke. We have been living in sin ever since.

So Jesus came to restore that relationship. It is hard for us to comprehend that the Creator of everything can truly understand our perspectives and feelings, but Jesus – fully human as well as fully divine – basically went through the full range of human emotions in one week, for us to see that God does truly understand our perspectives and feelings.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/triumphant-entry/>

Having worked for years to teach people about God, Jesus had gained honor and notoriety. He paraded into Jerusalem at the height of social popularity, hailed as a king and surrounded by many false friends as well as true disciples.

He went into the temple and got angry – the angriest we ever see Him – because of what people were doing that conflicted with His work. He had an intimate holiday dinner with his closest friends, one of whom

betrayed Him while putting on a show of caring.

His other friends did not do the simplest favor that He asked of them – staying awake, how much easier can a request get? One of them, who promised always to have His back no matter what, denied even knowing Him when Jesus was being tried and could really have used someone – anyone – speaking up on His behalf.

Jesus went from the heights of popularity crashing down to abandonment and torture. Along the way He experienced joy, anger, love, betrayal – pretty much any human emotion you can come up with – in a profoundly deep way. Jesus understands how we feel because He felt it too. Jesus is fully human as well as fully divine.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/in-awe-of-grace/palm-passion-sunday-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/palm-passion-sunday-year-a-graphics>

Jesus made it possible for us to relate to God again. God made this day for us, that we could be lifted out of sin and into the flourishing life in which we were created to live. So what are we doing with that gift?

Too often we let our egos get the better of us, forgetting to treat others with love and respect when we are made the center of attention. We make well-meaning promises and then fail to keep them. We reject authorities trying to correct us, and we do

not recognize God working in our midst.

God loves us anyway and keeps working with us. So on this day which the Lord has made, seek God in all the ways that you can. Whether you reach the greatest heights, the lowest lows, or anywhere in between, know that God walks with you and knows where you are.

Give it all to God, and let God make your day. You will be much happier and productive when you do.