

A Sidewalk Kind of Hope

Matthew 21:1-11

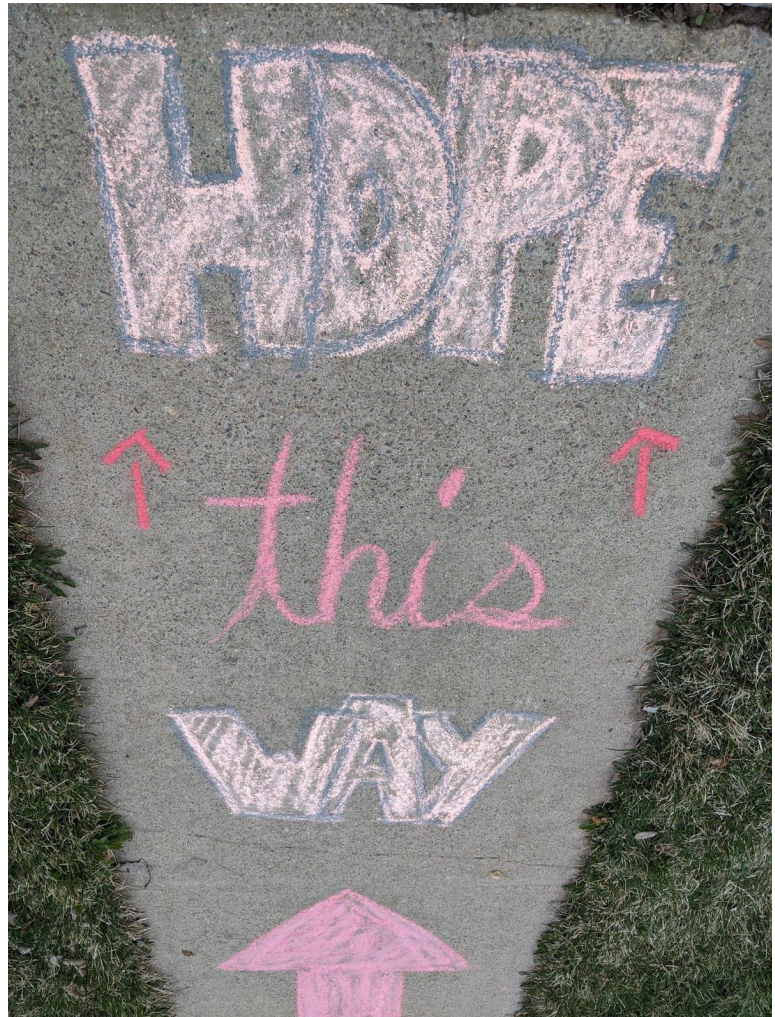
When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, “The Lord needs them.” And he will send them immediately.’ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

‘Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

‘Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!



Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’

Sermon

Matthew tells us that when Jesus entered into the city of Jerusalem, the city was in turmoil, and most surely, they were, but not just because Jesus was coming. The people there had been in turmoil, because their city and their country were being occupied by the Roman army. The people were praying for a Messiah, someone to set them free - to let them return to life as they saw fit, to life as they felt God was calling them to live it. They were searching for a Savior and seeking a sign of hope.

And yes, I’m sure that for many of them, the sign they were looking for looked a lot more like a conquering military general raising aloft a gleaming sword and riding a big white horse, than it did this humble, sandal wearing prophet on the foal of a donkey. But, God knew better what they needed, even than they did. God knew what would truly set them free. God knew where their hope really lived.

If I had to imagine a Savior, riding into Colorado today, I suppose they would come in on a jumbo-jet to open up the airport again - And that jet would be full of surgical masks and toilet paper. And when they landed they’d pass out small business loans, and rent checks, and syringes full of Vaccine.

But, I suppose God still knows better, about exactly what it is that we really need.

I went for a walk through my neighborhood the other day. At 6:30 in the morning, when no-one else was out. It was still pretty gray and dark. And after being shut up in my house for so long, I was feeling about the same. But, I started to notice:

- Now that all the kids are home from school
- And their starting to get bored of their tv shows and favorite websites
- And now that all of us need a little more human connection in our lives

Well, the sidewalks of my neighborhood are starting to look a little more colorful than their normal grey concrete. The children of my neighborhood have started writing messages of hope, in sidewalk chalk. And I suspect that they’ve even roped some of their parents in to helping out. They’ve written things like:

- This too shall pass.



- We'll get through this.
- "Smile" and,
- Stay Positive

And so I went online, and I found that my neighborhood isn't the only one, but around the world, the kids have been giving people hope. They've drawn rainbows and crosses in the style of stained glass windows, writing:

- Stay Strong and
- You can do this
- And they've drawn pictures of the sun, saying "brighten someone else's day"

And sure, the rain will come one day and wash these messages of hope away. But, if we remember the whole story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, we know that the rain fell back then too. A few days after that Palm Sunday parade, those same people who waved their palm fronds and laid down their coats, shouting, "Hosanna in the highest heaven." had changed their shouts to "Crucify Him." And they threw him over to that same Roman Army that they hoped he would save them from. Because we are a fickle people, and hope is a fragile thing.

But, I suppose that is why we need Hope all the more. And I believe that's why God keeps sending it, day in and day out, over and over again. We need these messages of hope, and God keeps sending them in every unexpected way:

- Through humble prophets riding on donkeys
- Through phone calls from members of your church
- Through the sun that rises out of the gloomy, misty morning
- And the flowers breaking through the dirt
- Through children with their pastel sidewalk chalk
- And yes, even through you.

And I think God wants to use you now more than ever.

- So wave your palm frond and lay down your coat
- Give to the food-bank
- Make a donation to organizations that care for people who don't have homes
- Volunteer your time

Christ is coming into the world once again - so let us celebrate with generosity, kindness, and love. And we will find that even if our generosity is not appreciated,

or our love is not accepted. Even if the hope we share gets washed away in the rain, or humiliated and nailed to a cross, we can trust that it will rise again. Because the hope God shares will live forever. It comes from an endless spring, that bubbles over, and keeps on flowing. This is the hope we really need today.

So get out your sidewalk chalk and write the hope God shares with you. Lay down your coats, and thus proclaim: “Hosanna in the Highest Heaven!” and “Thanks Be To Our God!”

Amen.



This sermon was first shared with Aurora First Presbyterian Church, by Rev. Doug Friesema. To receive future communications from the church, please contact:

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