



# DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

## **Palm Sunday (C) – Philippians 2:5-11**

**Focus:** *Same Mind as Christ*

### **word of life**

**“And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:7b-8 NRSV)**

Read Philippians 2:5-11

On Palm Sunday, churches gather throughout the world to wave palm branches and shout, “Hosanna in the highest.” And so begins Holy Week, a week when the church recalls the final week in the life of Jesus. It is a week filled with passion as Jesus experiences the worst of humanity—one of his own disciples betrays him, another denies him, and others abandon him. Even religious leaders plot to have him killed. He endures physical harm and mockery as he prepares to face death itself—death on a cross.

1. *Briefly summarize the story of Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday.*
2. *If you would have been a witness to the events of Holy Week, what emotions might you have felt throughout the week?*

Many have tried to capture the passion of Holy Week through art, poetry, and music. A hymn of the early church describing Jesus’ final week is included in Philippians 2. It is unclear if Paul originally wrote these words or just recalled them for the Philippians. Because this hymn describes the movement from death to resurrection, it was probably used during baptisms in the early church. (Philippians 2:5-11 is not the only hymn included in the New Testament. See Colossians 1:15-20, 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:3-4 for other possible hymns.)

Christians are invited to have the same mind as Christ Jesus. That is easier said than done. Although Jesus was God, he willingly took on human form. He did not exploit his connection to God, but did just the opposite. He emptied himself and was born in human likeness. From the beginning, the story of Jesus is one of humility.

3. *What does it mean to empty oneself?*
4. *What does it mean for Jesus to have been born in human likeness?*

Jesus’ obedience to God led him to the cross and his own death. It is understandable why many wanted Jesus to use power to stop the proceedings. The people who mocked Jesus as the Son of God realized the irony of the situation. They were attempting to lure Jesus into claiming his God-given powers. What kind of God allows such proceedings? Where was God during the crucifixion?

5. *How do you answer these questions?*
6. *What questions do you have about the events of Holy Week?*

The death of Jesus on the cross is not the final word for God. The hymn continues into a triumphant song of victory. “Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)

7. *How did God exalt Jesus?*
8. *Where do you find glory in the events of Holy Week?*

## **Word among us**

Ash Wednesday might seem like a distant memory. On that day, ashes were put on our foreheads and we heard the sobering words, “From dust you came, and from dust you shall return.” Many Christians try to set apart Lent by sacrificing something or taking on a spiritual discipline such as prayer, study, or service.

1. *Take a moment to reflect on the season of Lent. What have you learned about yourself during Lent?*
2. *What have you learned about Jesus Christ during Lent?*

The palms of Palm Sunday mark the beginning of Holy Week. These same palms will be used as next year’s ashes on Ash Wednesday. So, whether you made a commitment to change your habits for the season of Lent or not, here is second chance—an opportunity for additional prayer, worship, study, journaling, and service. This will probably mean clearing your schedule of appointments and making Holy Week a priority.

Look in your local newspaper for special worship services and events offered during Holy Week. Be sure to notice what other denominations are offering. Embrace an ecumenical spirit and take full advantage of the rich traditions of other Christian churches. Thus, you might experience daily prayer Monday through Wednesday, foot washing and Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday, Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, an Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, and a sunrise service on Easter morning. Continue to listen for the voice of Christ throughout Holy Week.

3. *Recall Holy Week worship services which have blessed your life.*
4. *What might be gained by setting aside Holy Week to listen for the voice of Christ?*

Paul writes in Philippians, “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 2:5 NRSV) This mind of Christ is one marked by humility. He emptied himself in order to be obedient to God. It’s hard to comprehend the full meaning of these words.

5. *How might we use Holy Week to empty ourselves?*
6. *What does it mean to be marked by humility?*

## **faith practice in daily life**

### **Hear the Word of God and share in the Lord’s Supper**

During Holy Week, we pause and hear the Word of God. As many times as we have heard the story of Jesus going into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, we know the story doesn’t change. He is betrayed, denied, and abandoned by his disciples. Although innocent, he dies on the cross. The story doesn’t change, but we are changed by God’s love as proclaimed throughout Holy Week.

Even if your schedule will not allow you to attend many of the Holy Week worship services, consider meditating on this verse, Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 2:5 NRSV)

7. *How might you set aside Holy Week for your own spiritual growth?*

### **Prayer**

Christ Jesus, let us have the same mind as you. Amen.

### ***last word***

Meditate on having the same mind  
that is in Christ Jesus.

#### *Daily Faith Practices*

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