


Straight from the "Hart"

March 24, 2024 Palm-Passion Sunday



HARTLAND



Sharing the journey
to know, love, and serve

Making a Fresh Start (7): Resetting Broken Dreams

Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are glad you are here and participating in worship through this service script.

This is Palm, Passion Sunday, so the colors turn from the purple of royalty and preparation through repentance to red, in anticipation of his passion at week's end – representing the blood of Christ and of all the martyrs who died for his cause. Today's litany that takes us through holy week from the perspective of many of Christ's followers.

Litany for Holy Week (P – Pastor C – Congregation)

P: Today we cheer you on as our champion and hail you as our hero.

C: Forgive us tomorrow -- when our enthusiasm wanes.

P: Today we trust you to rescue us from our difficult circumstances.

C: Forgive us on Tuesday -- when we decide we can take care of ourselves.

P: Today we make you the centerpiece of our very existence.

C: Forgive us on Wednesday -- when we forget who you are.

P: Today we call out to you loudly by name.

C: Forgive us on Thursday -- when we pretend that we've never met you.

P: Today we stare at you with the star struck eyes of fans and groupies.

C: Forgive us on Friday -- when we avert our eyes because it's too painful to see you on the cross.

P: Today we express our unsuppressed hope in the future you have in store for us.

C: Forgive us on Saturday -- when we believe all is lost.

P: Today we are boldly certain of the earthly ways you will redeem us.

C: Restore and reset our spirits on Sunday -- when we are startled and awed by your rising.

adapted from "A Short Litany as Holy Week Begins"
by Rev. Christine Sobania Johnson, freshlysqueezedliturgy.blogspot.com

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, we have come to meet you today, never knowing quite what you have in store for us. We think we know what we need, and how you can meet them. But it is not our call, it is your will. So we come humbly, honoring you as our Savior by laying our lives before you. Reveal yourself to us that we proclaim you as we worship in your name, Amen.

Please remain standing for the Call to Worship and first song.

Call to Worship

We have gathered to see Jesus come. He comes from the mountainside, the seaside, the homes of the rich and the company of the poor, and from the bedsides of those who are sick. He comes along dusty roads with a ragged band of travelers. Jesus comes to Jerusalem. He comes to worship, and we gather to greet him with Hosannas.

Opening Prayer and Call to Worship: adapted from "Jesus is Coming!"
by Carol Penner, carolpenner.typepad.com/leadinginworship

Music Let's do that by singing together

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

Words: Theodulph of Orleans; trans. by John Mason Neale
Music: Melchior Teschner; harm. by W.H. Monk

Refrain

All glory, laud, and honor, to thee, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.

3. The people of the Hebrews with psalms before thee went;
our prayer and praise and anthems before thee we present.

Refrain

4. To thee, before thy passion, they sang their hymns of praise;
to thee, now high exalted, our melody we raise.

Refrain

5. Thou didst accept their praises; accept the prayers we bring,
who in all good delightest, thou good and gracious King.

Refrain

Footnote: "laud" -- Latin laudere, meaning "to praise." To laud someone is to glorify them, or to sing their praises, even if you're not actually singing. (vocabulary.com)

Responsive Reading 1 (R – Reader C – Congregation)

R: Now let's read about the event responsively. It was predicted by the prophets,

lived by Jesus, and will ultimately be fulfilled in heaven. (Pause)

R: Rejoice and shout in triumph! Your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious.

C: Yet he is humble, riding on a donkey's colt.

R: He will remove all the battle chariots, war horses, and weapons used in battle. Your king will bring peace to the nations.

C: His realm will stretch to the ends of the earth.

R: News of Jesus' arrival to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd took palm branches and went out to greet him, shouting:

C: Hosanna! (Deliver us!) Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!

R: Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it.

C: Don't be afraid. See, your king is coming!

R: After this, there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and people and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out loud, saying:

C: Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!

R: And everyone fell on their faces around the throne and worshiped God, singing

C: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanks-giving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

From Zechariah 9:9-10, John 12:12-16a, Revelation 7:9-12

Special Music The Seasonal Singers are going to come and sing about that excitement seen by the prophets, experienced by the first disciples and followers, and anticipated when we arrive at heaven. Listen to us sing Filled with Excitement



Filed with Excitement

Words: Ruben Ruiz Avila, 1972; trans. by Gertrude C. Suppe, 1979, 1987

Music: Ruben Ruiz Avila, 1972; arr. by Alvin Schutmaat
© 1972, 1979, 1989 The UM Publishing House

1. Filled with excitement, all the happy throng
spread cloaks and branches on the city streets.
There in the distance they began to see,
riding on a donkey comes the Son of God.

Refrain

From every corner a thousand voices sing
praises to him who comes in the name of God.

With one great shout of acclamation loud
triumphant song breaks forth:
“Hosanna to the King! Hosanna to the King!”

2. As in that entrance to Jerusalem,
we sing hosannas to the Christ, our King,
to the living Savior who still calls today,
asking us to follow him with love and faith.

Refrain



Special Music Of course, what Jesus knew was that this glorious ride would lead to something completely different than what most everyone expected that day. Listen as we sing **Ride On, Ride On in Majesty**

Words: Henry Hart Milman, 1827
Music: William Henry Monk, 1823-1889

1 Ride on, ride on in majesty! Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry;
O Savior meek, pursue your road with palms and scattered garments strowed.

2 Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die.
O Christ, your triumphs now begin o'er captive death and conquered sin.

3 Ride on, ride on in majesty! The angel armies of the sky
look down with sad and wond'ring eyes to see th'approaching sacrifice.

5 Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die.
Bow your meek head to mortal pain, then take, O Christ, Your pow'r and reign.

Music It was his power and reign that we were looking for on that first Palm Sunday when Jesus entered Jerusalem for Passover. We were looking for it because we have heard of his life and teachings and blessings on those who needed and sought God's touch. Let's sing



Tell Me the Stories of Jesus

Words: William H. Parker, 1885
Music: Frederick A. Challinor, 1903

1. Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear;
things I would ask him to tell me if he were here:
scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

2. First let me hear how the children stood round his knee,
and I shall fancy his blessing resting on me;
words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,
all in the lovelight of Jesus' face.

3. Into the city I'd follow the children's band,
waving a branch of the palm tree high in my hand;
one of his heralds, yes, I would sing
loudest hosannas, "Jesus is King!"

Music And as we meet the king, we turn our undivided attention upon him. -- Like a spotlight lighting the lead hero while the rest of the stage fades to pitch black, when we turn to Jesus, everything else in our world fades from view. Let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

Words and Music: Helen H. Lemmel, 1922
© 1922, renewed 1950, Singspiration Music

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face,
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim
in the light of his glory and grace.

(Repeat all)

Prayers

Please hold your palm branches in your hands and feel its texture. We raised them high in the last song (metaphorically, apparently: 😊). But now let's *feel* that event coming. Let's pray. God of transformation, we are learning that Jesus' ride into Jerusalem was more than a show, more than a provocation of the people, more than the beginning of a celebration. It was, and is, a signal that things are changing, that despite the powers that be, the world as we know it is becoming the world as it should be. It was a radical act of prophetic defiance directed against those who wield power through violence, oppression, and tyranny.

It tells the whole world that you are coming to make all things new, to turn us from war to peace; to free those who find themselves in bondage from injustice, from addiction, from conformity or apathy or whatever else is holding them back, to provide for the poor, to assure dignity to all people, and end hostile divisions through the offering of healing, wholeness, comfort, consolation, and hope. You are coming to transform all that we know. You are coming to save us.

Just as you did then, you come to us humbly, gently, through the mystery of love incarnate, through lives transformed and inspired, through ordinary people like us, blessed by you to do extraordinary things.

Come, to a world that longs for change, that needs your love, that is ripe with hope and potential -- Come to meet the needs of your people. **Petitions** Today, * Terri asks us to continue praying for Stephen Britain with cancer, * and Vivian Lemon requests prayers to the family and friends of Richard Charlic of Brighton and Karen Carrol, who both passed away this week, * and we continue to remember the family and friends of Jan Martin as well, * we pray for Fran

Warthman, * and any others that weigh heavy on our hearts and minds, because of their difficulties, or because they are so close to us, we pray for them even in good times. We lift them to you now in this moment of silence. [Pause]

And now Lord, we pray that we can see your coming kingdom emerge all around us, living and using the words that Jesus taught us: **Lord's Prayer**

adapted from portions of "Palm Sunday Prayer" by John W. Vest, johnvest.com

Lenten Cross Candles

- * We extinguished the "**Ashen Return**" Candle, recognizing how challenging it is to heed God's call to return to him daily in order to stay on his spiritual course for us. (put out bottom candle).
- * We extinguished the "**Resist**" Candle, recognizing how challenging it is to resist the temptations of life. (put out the next candle).
- * We extinguished the "**Resolve**" Candle, recognizing how challenging it is to persist when life offers resistance and discouraging setbacks. (put out next candle).
- * We extinguished the "**Repent**" Candle, recognizing how challenging it is to turn away from negative patterns that hinder us from positive habits.
- * We extinguished the pink Laetare "**Reconcile**" candle, (put out next candle) recognizing how challenging it is desire, seek, and find wholeness in strained, even dysfunctional, relationships.
- * We extinguished the "**Renew**" (put out next candle) candle, recognizing how challenging it is to keep putting fresh energy into something that we are not designed nor called to become.
- * This week's candle is labeled "**Reset**"

When bowling, every once in a while the pin setting machine will set down less than the full 10 pins. In some alleys you have to go through the computer scoring machine, sometimes you have to go up to the desk, usually there is a button on the bowling ball return rack that you can push, and it is called the "reset button" and when pushed it tells the machine to start all over, bring down the arm and sweep all the pins away, and bring down a new set, hopefully this time of 10 pinds. Sometimes you have to do it more than once before it gets it right – sometimes persistence is needed to reset.

Sometimes we also need a fresh start and a reset in our lives and spiritual lives. But to illustrate, let's switch metaphors. Life is like a bike ride. Sometimes we hit bumpy roads or obstacles. We fail to keep our balance and we fall. We have to reset ourselves so we can continue our journey. But here is the difference between bowling and biking. In a bowling reset, the machine wipes out all the pins and starts all over from the beginning of that frame. In biking, we get up off the ground, pick up the bike, as best we can, we fix any damage we caused to ourselves, the bike, and whatever we may have hit that made us fall, but we don't have to go all the way back to the garage and start at the beginning. We go on right on from where we fell, and that is how our spiritual life works as well. If we fail, we don't have to get saved all over again, we don't have to become a baby Christian and start from scratch all over again. We just do our best to fix anything that has been damaged by our failure, damage to ourselves, damage to our situation, or damage to others – and then you move on right from where you fell off...

Our reading shows that even after living with Jesus for 3 years, it was still difficult to stay the course.

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

We turn our attention from the palms and move toward the passion happening later in the week. Passover was approaching. Religious leaders were plotting how to kill Jesus without losing public approval. Judas arrives, strikes a deal with them, and begins looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus secretly, away from the crowds.

Meanwhile, Jesus has instructed Peter and John to go into Jerusalem to set up their Passover meal. Then the meal begins. Jesus establishes the new covenant through the bread and cup and announces that one of them would betray him. They began asking each other who could do such a thing. See Luke 22:1-23



Then they began to argue among themselves about who should be considered the greatest among them. Jesus told them, "In this world the kings and those in authority lord it over their people, yet they are given the title, "Benefactor" and called 'friends of the people.' But it will be different with you. Those who are the greatest among you should be like the younger,

and the leader who rules should be like one who serves. Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? It's the one who sits at the table, isn't it? But I am among you as one who serves.

"You have stayed with me throughout my trials. And just as my Father has granted me the right to rule, I now grant you the right to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom and to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

"Simon, Simon, listen! The Adversary has demanded to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your trust should not fail. And once you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers!"

Simon said, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!"

Jesus replied, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you deny three times that you even know me." Luke 22:24-34 (NLT, CJB)

Music Simon said he was able to remain faithful even if meant prison and death. I like to imagine we have the faith to love and hope for ourselves and others as well. This song speaks to our faith in what God can do in ourselves and in others... let's sing...

Are Ye Able?

Words: Earl Marlatt, 1926, Music: Harry S. Mason, 1924

1. "Are ye able," said the Master, "to be crucified with me?"
 "Yea," the sturdy dreamers answered, "to the death we follow thee."

Refrain

Lord, we are able. Our spirits are thine. Remold them, make us, like thee, divine.
 Thy guiding radiance above us shall be a beacon to God, to love, and loyalty.

2. Are ye able to remember, when a thief lifts up his eyes,
 that his pardoned soul is worthy of a place in paradise?

Refrain

4. Are ye able? Still the Master whispers down eternity,
 and heroic spirits answer, now as then in Galilee.

Refrain

Sermon Resetting Broken Dreams

In a sitcom, two lifelong friends were in love with each other – but both were afraid to tell each other. Now he has accepted a job in Hong Kong. She decides she would craft a beautiful talk in which she confesses her undying love and ask him

to stay. Just outside the door of his workplace, holding a recently acquired Chihuahua, she goes through her notes one last time. We watch as she enters and gives her prepared speech perfectly and he responds by saying he has been waiting all his life to hear her say this and of course he would stay and that they would begin a relationship. It was the perfect dream.

And in fact, it was, for she was imagining this, still standing outside that door, holding her little dog and looking at her notes.

Broken Dreams

Big sigh. “Okay, here we go.” and she enters. She says she wants to talk to him. He puts his work aside. She sets the dog down, and she starts --- oh, but the dog caught his attention. “What a cutie! How are you doing fella?” A couple of their friends come over and they also happily fuss over the puppy, and they move off with the dog to a nearby table. Meanwhile she is standing off to the side and getting no attention at all. Then she starts yelling out weird things trying to catch their attention to no avail. She finally yells out something very personally embarrassing and that is when they snap their attention to her. She says it wasn’t really true, she was just trying to get their attention. The close friend apologizes and comes back to her. She tries to **reset** and begin her heartfelt sentiments again, but now the magical moment is ruined and passed, and she fumbles through -- of course she had put her notes away, she can’t use them now (like I do) and she is flustered and she can’t get the words out, and finally, in frustration, she gives up and says she hopes he has a good time in Hong Kong and walks out defeated. (Miranda, S1, Ep 6 “Dog”)

Jesus had experienced the palms of this Sunday, and he is beginning to teach his final words to his disciples about what the future holds for them, and his final instructions to them. He made special arrangements for them to get together in an upper room and have a *very special* (last) Passover Meal. If you have ever been through a Seder meal, you know that it is filled with symbolism and proclamation as it both relives the past and anticipates the future. It is the high holy day.

Jesus has *eagerly desired* to eat this Passover with them before he dies. Luke (Luke 22:14-16) treats this event like a destiny fulfilling moment -- a moment that changes everything that follows. Imagine how Jesus has probably rehearsed in his mind the events of the night and how he wants it to go: An audience of faithful friends hanging on every word and taking in every moment in one of those holy hush events...

Enter the Chihuahua.

Palm Sunday and the teachings about the destruction of the Temple and a second coming had heightened the expectations of the disciples. They sensed things were coming to a head. After being with Jesus nearly 24-7 for years, after hearing him talk repeatedly about self-denial and love for others; yet this is what they still anticipated: that they were about to see the kingdom of God appear on earth; that Jesus would, with divine power, conquer Rome and rule the world; and that, with Christ, they would be leaders over all the peoples of the earth.

And so, in the middle of what Jesus hoped were his final inspiring words, the disciples, like the friends fussing over the puppy, launched into one of their pet arguments -- fussing with each other over who would be the greatest in this new heaven on earth dynasty. In the midst of this distracted cross conversation Jesus attempts to offer wonderful words of life. **Do we ever get so distracted -- by our own agenda -- that we miss Jesus' words?** It isn't quoted in the Bible this way, but you might imagine the upper room going something like this:

[✂ reach arms out when Jesus talks, ☹ cross arms when disciples talk]

✂ J: "Here, I am offering you my undying love."

☹ D: "Well I think I should have more authority than him."

✂ J: "I am establishing a new covenant with God through my suffering, my death, my broken body and spilt blood"

☹ D: "Well I should get this prime territory over there, after all I am the eldest."

✂ J: "I have prayed for your unity."

☹ D: "He's the youngest, he shouldn't get that much."

✂ J: "One of you is going to betray me."

Well that caught their attention -- temporarily.

☹ D: "Well whoever that is shouldn't get any territory". "What are we going to do with the Roman soldiers and emperors?" "I still say I deserve more than those two -- they had their mom come and talk to Jesus about it, remember that? They can't even speak for themselves."

And all their *pet ideas* kept them totally distracted from Jesus as they sat and they argued.

They not only forgot to listen to Jesus' words in that room, they forgot about the basic actions of love... Even

Distractions – Words

Distractions - Actions

now, if someone is coming to stay at your house, even for just a visit, you greet them at the door, sometimes with a handshake hug or maybe a hug, and you take their hat and coat and perhaps even have them kick off their shoes, right?.

In a “walking-in-sandals, hot, dusty (and other stuff) desert culture”, the first common practice of basic hospitality was to have guests remove their sandals and with water and towel, cool and clean the hot dusty feet of the weary traveler. What would be more refreshing, restoring and welcoming? Because it is not just dust that they stepped in...

But they were either too busy, too distracted, or more likely, too worried about defending their importance over each other; that none dared to stoop to practice hospitality, for it was usually a host’s servant who performed this act.

So, like many meetings held at meals, this meeting was turning into herding cats. Maybe it was already part of Jesus’ plan for the night, but Jesus, perhaps unable to grab their attention by words, he takes action. (See John 13:4-5ff) He gets up from the table, he ties on a towel, he pours water into a large basin, he washes their feet and wipes them dry with the towel. Now after riding into Jerusalem to palms and cloaks, if there was anyone in the room who should not be doing this important but simple act of hospitality – it was the Master Rabbi. Jesus shocked and embarrassed them back to reality, back to the present moment, back to paying attention. **What does Jesus have to resort to in order to get our attention in this modern world?** – Peter refused the washing until Jesus insisted. Jesus is not as flummoxed as the woman with her little dog. Having recaptured their attention, he *resets* and even takes time for -- (it could have been planned, it could have been impromptu) – a teaching moment about leadership.

Earthly rule is sought and based on outward acts of power – the more forceful, the more popular, the more important they were perceived to be. Yet after ordering everyone around, they want credit for every little thing they do. The common people they rule must call them their benefactors. They want to be rulers who are seen as supporting and serving the people; even though their policies and actions do not do that, and sometimes do the very opposite of that.

Yes, we should strive for excellence, but Jesus doesn’t define excellence as power to become king of the mountain. Remember that game? The way you get to the top is by clawing and grabbing and throwing others down – and fending off

Shocked to attention

Earthly Rule seeks power – recognition

their grabs at you -- and the closer you get to the top, the more people try to pull you down -- down off of a mountain that we think we rule and that we own Jesus would remind them that this way leads to constant unhealthy competition and criticism and selfish demands for ownership over what in reality all belongs to the Lord. (Psalm 95:3-5)

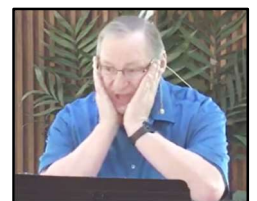
Kingdom rule, on the other hand, is not about enjoying special privileges or commanding others; it seeks to serve each other humbly and unselfishly as kindred

Kingdom rule seeks to serve kindred family

family. The natural order of things was that “the greatest” (the eldest) had authority over the younger, the one being served at the table had more power than the servant who was serving at the table. (They didn’t have restaurants then, so don’t make that connection) But -- Jesus lived among them as one who served, (so it wouldn’t matter anyway). True leaders carry out their tasks as true benefactors who *do* support and serve the interests of those they lead (whether those people being led realize it or not). Teaching moment over.

Jesus gets back to his words of farewell. He thanks them for their persistent loyalty and service by his side, especially during difficult days. He will indeed assign them roles of authority, but not with the reward of worldly power and honor. They will receive instead a covenant relationship with God and the privilege and responsibility of making just judgments and joyfully participating in God’s kingdom.

This responsibility reminds Jesus of the soon to be coming role of his senior disciple. He turns to Peter and says “Simon, Simon. Listen!” This is no casual conversation. Metaphorically, see it as the parent who gets down on their knees so they can get face to face with their little kid, maybe even puts their hands on their face and says “Look at me, pay attention, listen carefully...”



Jesus is not referring to him as (Peter) the rock of the church – his strength in Christ, but in his human frailty: Listen, Simon, Satan, like he did with Job in the Old Testament has demanded to test just how persistently loyal you disciples really are – he has asked to sift you all like wheat.

Sifting

Now we aren’t as familiar with sifting, and it is primarily done with machines in our country now. But the basic idea is, sifting begins by threshing -- whipping the wheat against something solid to separate the grain from the stalks and loosens the husks, the chaff from the grain. Then it is winnowed, thrown into the air to let the wind blow through it – the heavier grain falls back to the earth while the husk,

the chaff is carried away in the wind. (Another biblical image is putting it a sieve, (you know how you panhandle for gold?) keeping the best while letting the useless material fall back to the earth). The Adversary wasn't interested in threshing, sifting and sorting – he was hoping to see all the disciples blown away -- that there would be no savable gospel seed left in the scattered disciples. *Why does God allow such things to happen?*

First, understand that every challenge in life is not a sifting. Sometimes we suffer the consequences of actions and accidents that go against natural laws like gravity and momentum. Or we bring it on challenges by our own bad judgments. Sometimes we suffer because we live in a fallen world where people make mistakes and/or bad decisions or deliberately bad decisions, and innocent people are hurt. Sometimes it is because with humanity, nature has fallen from its design, and for no fault of our own we endure hardships.

But when these adversarial things come our way, if we allow it -- it can become a sifting process. Sifting can be useful if (1) we allow it to blow us into God's hands, and (2)

**God shakes out sin
and saves the good**

we allow him to separate good grain from useless chaff. The bulletin cover paraphrases Amos with two lovely ideas – one is that in the threshing and shaking, sin gets separated out of us, making us better for the process; and the other idea is not even the smallest grain of faithfulness, of goodness, will be lost (through that sieve).

Another question from this short exchange between Peter and Jesus is this: If Satan has demanded to sift all the disciples –

Shakes out Pride

why is he directing his conversation only to Simon? Did you notice the confidence of Simon: “Me? Never. I’ll never fail you. I’ll go to prison and death for you, that is fine. I’ll never turn away –no chaff in my bones - I am all grain!” One of the greatest deterrents to placing ourselves into God’s hands for his sifting is pride.

Joe Walcott was known as the Barbados Demon, welterweight champion of the world from 1901-1904. Some of you – well it’s probably before your time for most of you 😊) He was under 5’ 2” and never over 148 pounds. He was extremely successful even against lightweight and heavyweight boxers. He had fantastic stamina and durability as well as a proven punch. Pound for pound he was one of the greatest fighters in boxing history. He is the one who is credited with coining the phrase: “The bigger they are the harder they fall.”

The Bible says it too – If you think you are standing firm, be careful -- that you do not fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12) The proud will be humbled, but the humble in spirit will be honored. (Proverbs 29:23)

Jesus tells Peter that not only would he be blown away, he would be blown away before early morning, and not just once – but three times. And we know that Peter, the coming Rock of the Church, arguably the right-hand man of Jesus, fell hard that night -- the bitter weeping by the campfire should still echo in our ears as a warning; lest we think we too, in our Simon-ese strength, in our human strength – that we can never fail.

But back to the question – why talk to Simon and not to all the soon-to-be sifted and deserting disciples? Because – in Jesus resets us spite of Jesus' knowing that it was just a matter of hours when the disciples would disappear into the night and Peter would swear that he didn't know Jesus; Jesus prayed for him; and when Peter was – to use our word of the day – when Peter was RESET – it would be God working primarily through Peter that would return the strength of persistent loyalty to the others who were scattered in the wind that night. Notice that when Jesus says this, he has changed his naming back from “Simon” to “Peter.” When you have returned Peter, the rock of the church, when you have returned to that place, when you are reset...

When we fail and fall on the bike ride of faith, don't go all the way back to the garage to start riding again, but don't wait to get back on the bike – spend no time in getting up, dusting yourself off, make what went wrong as right as possible, and get back on the right track and get from where you are.

This is true discipleship of Jesus' leadership – not lording it over others in the alleged name of being a benefactor, a supporter of people being led, but then nonchalantly blowing away any that have disappointing setbacks. True leadership takes on the resetting and the rebuilding of his people. The responsibility of selflessly offering to intercede and help people who need to **reset** their lives in Christ. To let people understand that we have all been in that same boat, but we can't get knocked out if, in Christ, we keep getting back up and moving forward to offer strength for the journey to others by being gracious encouragers, for Jesus said.

“...but I have prayed for you, [so that] when you have turned back, you can strengthen the others... (Luke 22:31) or as The Message puts it: “...turn to your companions and give them a fresh start.

Prayer Let's pray. Lord, there are times when our expectations and hopes for how we want our next days to play out don't pan out and our dreams are broken, much like Peter's expectations of himself, much like the Palm Sunday cheerers' expectations of Jesus. Hopes are dashed, longings are left unmet, and we are disappointed in ourselves, perhaps in others, and even in you.

And yet, you have promised when that when such times come, you have a gracious plan that restores our lives, rebuilds our faith, and resets our dreams to something that may be different, but can be far better than we ever imagined, such as the Palm Sunday expectations about freedom from the power of Rome was changed to freedom from the power of sin. Lord, you give us vision to dream your dreams. May we hear and see them. Give us the courage to give to others the same kind of grace we have received from you when expectations go unmet, and help others to reset their lives as you have helped us reset ours throughout the years....in Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Music The fact that Peter failed Jesus, but Christ was able to reset his life on the right course should speak to the opportunity God gives us to reset our lives through Jesus, and how we should respond to people when they let us down. Let's sing

God, How Can We Forgive?

Words: Ruth Duck, © 1996 The Pilgrim Press

Music: Hebrew Melody, Sacred Harmony; harm. from Hymns Ancient and Modern, alt.

1. God how can we forgive when bonds of love are torn?
How can we rise and start a new, our trust reborn?
When human loving fails and every hope is gone,
your love gives strength beyond our own to face the dawn.
2. When we have missed the mark, and tears of anguish flow,
how can you still release our guilt, the debt we owe?
The ocean depth of grace surpasses all our needs.
A priest who shares our human pain, Christ intercedes
3. Who dares to throw the stone to damn another's sin,
when you, while knowing all our past, forgive again?
No more we play the judge, for by your grace we live.
As you, O God, forgive our sin, may we forgive.

Blessing

And now echoes of the last "hosanna" fades and the palm branches are quietly put away. The cross now looms at the end of a pain-filled and glory-less week.

Nevertheless, we leave to walk our way into the holiest of weeks with an uneasy peace, with the gift of faith, with courage, and with love. Amen.

Loosely adapted from portions of "Sending Words" by Cheryl Lawrie, holdthisspace.org.au

CCLI # 2561297