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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**March 28, 2021**

**Palm Sunday - Jesus' Confounding Emotions**

**Selected Scriptures**

**Prayer:** *Father, I thank you for who you are. I thank you for your goodness, I just thank you for the gifts that you give to us. And Lord, we're coming into that season where this Easter is just the most amazing of gifts, Lord, the very gift of your Son engaged in that cosmic battle, and we're just so pleased and thankful that you were willing to give us of that gift. And again, Lord, we just want to look this morning, we're kind of unpacking that a bit, we're looking at Palm Sunday. I just want to pray for the gift of your Holy Spirit that you would open up our eyes and our ears and our hearts and our ability to take these things in and to again make them of permanent value. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well Palm Sunday as you know is the celebration of Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. And there's many different ways to examine how that celebration unfolded. There's a historical story to tell about it, there's a prophetic story to tell as well, but this morning I want to focus on two events that took place during Jesus' triumphal entry that tell a very different and I

think sometimes overlooked story about the Lord Jesus Christ and that is his emotional reaction to the events of Palm Sunday.

The events surrounding Palm Sunday contain three different overt displays of emotion that were very rare in Jesus' life. Two of them describe profound grief, in one of them anger that bordered on rage. Jesus' emotional life is one that we seldom focus on but it gives us a deeper insight into just what the cross cost him and how deeply he loved us. To get at the emotional side of the story we first have to describe it from an historic as well as prophetic prospective. And so first the history.

Well, the events of Palm Sunday are best described not just as some kind of spontaneous event but as part of a sovereign God's plan that started with a promise. It was a promise that was planned for before we even existed and put into place starting from the very first time that we rebelled against him. Understand that before Adam even drew his first breath, God knew he would have to go to the cross to rescue his chosen ones from their own sinfulness. In fact God's plan for the events of this week was first announced as a promise in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve had decided to side with the serpent against their creator. God tells Adam and Eve and the serpent what their fate will be, and he makes this cryptic statement to the serpent in *Genesis 3:14*. He says:

*"Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."* So God tells the serpent that for all time there will be enmity between his offspring and the woman's offspring and then at some point her offspring will crush the head of the serpent while the serpent's offspring is crushing and bruising his heel. And what God is saying in this poetic language that for all time there's going to be enmity between the serpent's offspring -- and that's the powers of darkness -- and the woman's offspring, who was to be the Lord Jesus Christ. You have to remember, Jesus came into this world through the agency of only one human being, and that was a woman, the woman Mary. Just think of the honor that God has bestowed on women alone. I mean, they were the agency through which God became flesh. There was no human male involved at all in God becoming flesh. Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and thus began her pregnancy that ended in Jesus' birth. And that baby, that baby would be the serpent's undoing.

Remember Herod's desperate attempts to kill the baby Jesus? Well, he was part of the serpent's offspring. He's somebody who knew what a threat Jesus was. I mean you have to remember Satan knows

scripture and he certainly knows what God's intent was in Jesus. 1  
*John 3:8* says: *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy  
the works of the devil.* The serpent's destruction would not be  
from anything other than Mary's offspring, the Lord Jesus Christ.  
And the cross itself, as brutal and as awful as it was, would be a  
temporary bruising of his heel that would occur as he's crushing  
the serpent's head.

If you ever saw Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, you see how  
a filmmaker interprets this prophesy. If you remember how the  
movie opens, it opens with this horrific betrayal, this  
fog-shrouded darkness that is the garden of Gethsemane and Jesus is  
in that garden in the dark and he's praying in agony. At one point  
as Jesus is praying a snake begins to slither out and slithers  
right over his limbs. And Jesus knowing that the cross is about to  
unfold he rises to his feet and he stomps it, crushing its head.  
Well the cross was Jesus' answer to a promise made by his Father in  
the garden of Eden: *"He will crush your head, and you will strike  
his heel."* I mean just think about this for a minute. Rather than  
the cross being some kind of unfortunate series of events,  
understand it as something planned for by God the Father, God the  
Son and God the Holy Spirit from before the moment we in the form  
of Adam and Eve sold our perfection for a promise from the devil  
that we would be just like God. I mean God knew that giving us the

freedom to choose him would also give us the opportunity to reject him as well and this is precisely what Adam and Eve did. They sided with the serpent against the God who had given them everything. I mean he gave them Eden itself with only one proviso, that they should not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Well, they believed the serpent when he told them that God was withholding from them the chance to be like he was. And so thinking they could be like God, they disobeyed God and thus gave up everything about them that was like God. Now as fallen creatures they were estranged from the very God who had created them. But you know when Adam and Eve rebelled against God, God was certainly not taken by surprise. Instead he began to immediately implement the plan that would rescue us from our folly. It was a plan that involved God becoming one of us, living out the life that we were intended to live and then dying in our place as a sacrifice for our sins. Many people still see Jesus as the victim of the religious leaders who hated him and Rome who saw him as a threat but that completely misses the point. See, Rome and the religious leaders, they were all just bit players in a drama that was played out by the sovereign hand of God. All of human history that flowed from that treason in the garden of Eden was pointing to one event, and it all began to unfold starting with Palm Sunday. This is *John 12*. It says: *The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took*

*branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"*

So those palms that we just gave out this morning, those are in remembrance of those palms that were laid down that day as Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem at the height of the Passover celebration. So what I want you to do is just picture Jesus and he's sitting, he's moving on a donkey through a crowd that has started out at the house of Simon and it's now making its way into Jerusalem. And this crowd is abuzz in anticipation but something is not quite right. It's Jesus riding on a donkey, looks nothing like a triumphant leader entering into the city as its new ruler. You see, the crowd expected a stallion, I mean, that's how triumphant military leaders rode into a city to announce their victory. Instead it gets a donkey.

Well, this is where the prophetic part of the story begins to unfold. We could spend hours and hours describing the precision of the prophesy that Daniel made centuries before describing to the day exactly what would unfold as Jesus entered Jerusalem. Suffice it to say that every single step of his journey was an unfolding of

events told centuries before even down to the donkey that Jesus was riding. Thousands of years earlier Zechariah prophesied in *Zechariah 9: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.* Now the sight of the donkey, it's confounding, but the crowd overlooks that because in that same crowd is the very same Lazarus that Jesus has brought back from the dead. You see, a separate crowd had gathered outside for a dinner that was being held for Jesus and Lazarus. And the word had gotten out that Lazarus was meeting with Jesus and the knowledge that this is the very one who had been raised from the dead brought huge crowds out, and it was this crowd that was marching into Jerusalem to meet up with the Passover crowd that was already assembling there in the first place. And so the crowd sees this Messiah riding on a donkey and thinks perhaps this Jesus just might be profoundly different from all the other messiahs that had come and gone. Well how little they actually knew. And how little did they actually see. You see back then as it even is today, most of what was unfolding prophetically, what the kingdom of God was actually accomplishing was happening way beyond the crowd's physical senses. What was taking place as that crowd made its way down the hill to Jerusalem was being viewed by far more than just the locals who were taking part in it. See, the entire universe

was bent over to see its King and Creator humble, mounted on a donkey entering into what he knew would be certain death. The earthly crowd at this point was ecstatic because they felt at long last they had their messiah, someone who was going to at last throw over the shackles of Roman rule and free these oppressed people. But the spirit universe knew that the war of the ages was about to unfold in one last battle where Jesus would defeat Satan to free his people from an oppression they couldn't even begin to understand at this time.

Luke's gospel describes the scene this way. It says: *And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near -- already on the way down the Mount of Olives -- the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"* And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, *"Teacher, rebuke your disciples."* He answered, *"I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."* Jesus knew that the greatest secret the world has ever known was a secret only to those on planet earth who had really no desire to know in the first place. But all the rest of creation already knew. I mean the heavens knew and the spirit world knew, even the inanimate objects knew. And Jesus



acknowledged that if those who had acknowledged even if unwittingly the enormity of what has taken place, if they had not given expression to the fact that the King of the universe was entering into the very battle of the ages, then as Jesus put it, even the rocks would have been forced to shout. But then Jesus who was no stranger to confounding actions once again did something that astounded both of his enemies and his disciples, and he showed part of himself that we often overlook. Verse 41 says: *And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it.*

Now again, you need to put yourself into that crowd. They've already been confounded by the donkey but in spite of that, their enthusiasm continues to grow to a fever pitch and they're putting down palms and cloaks and they're shouting and praising, so much so that the Pharisees, they're consumed with a jealous outrage. This is the greatest of earthly glory Jesus will ever see in his public ministry and his confounding response is to burst into tears. I mean the word used to describe Jesus' weeping here is not some comfortable word used to describe like a discreet tear shed here or there, in fact it's just the opposite. It describes a vocal wailing that cannot be contained or constrained by manners or discretion. It's a sorrow that bursts out of any type of social restraint. And scripture goes on to describe just what the sorrow was based on. Verse 41 says: *And when he drew near and saw the*

city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." Jesus was wailing over the fate that awaited Jerusalem because not only did Jesus know the exact outcome of what the present would be but he also knew what the future was, the near and distant future. And sure enough, 37 years after Jesus spoke these words, Rome surrounded Jerusalem on all sides and slaughtered them exactly as Jesus said they would. Jesus knew the future 37 years out and it so sickened him emotionally that he burst out in tears.

And just weeks before Jesus had another occasion to weep that was also equally confounding. He had arrived at the tomb of Lazarus, having delayed his appearance until Lazarus had been dead longer than three days. See, the Jews at that time believed that it was possible for a spirit to hover for three days before leaving permanently and Jesus wanted to make sure that there was no possibility that people could assume that Lazarus was anything but dead. And that sentiment was affirmed when Jesus said to Lazarus's

sister: *"Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days."* Jesus arrives at the tomb to find Mary and Martha distraught over the death of Lazarus who was also a dear personal friend of Jesus. I think that strikes us as odd. I mean, the idea that Jesus has a personal affection for someone just like a person would, and that's why Jesus had that affection, he was a person just like you and me. And we know that he loved Lazarus in particular because *John 11* says: *The sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."* When Lazarus died without Jesus, they couldn't help but share their frustration. In *John 11:32* it says: *Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."* When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, *"Where have you laid him?"* They said to him, *"Lord, come and see."* Jesus wept. Once again Jesus' emotional reaction is confounding. And what is confounding about Jesus' reaction is the good news that we know that he is bringing, I mean Jesus is planning all along to raise Lazarus from the dead. He's there now to accomplish that. He's there to powerfully demonstrate that he has the power over life and death. He has the power to restore Lazarus completely, and yet his reaction is one of confounding emotion. I mean it's not one of

victory, it's not even one of sorrow. In fact his emotional reaction is really one of rage.

"*Jesus wept*" is the shortest verse in the entire Bible and one of the most meaningful. I mean I think for us it's almost scandalous for us to think of Jesus as having these deep, intense personal emotions, his own personal friends, his own personal feelings, people that he cared for personally. We know this is the case with Lazarus because even after his death those who saw Jesus' reaction said in *John 11:36*: "*See how he loved him!*" Again, it's a strange notion, we think, that God would actually delight in a particular person, someone like you or me? So much so that people would say, "See how he loved him!" I mean I think we think of Jesus generically as God and not personally as the individual who he actually was with one hundred percent human emotions.

You know one of the attributes of God is his impassibility, and that is that God does not experience emotional change in any way. For example God's wrath, you know God's wrath is not like our wrath, it's not God suddenly getting really ticked off at our sin and emotionally deciding he's going to respond that way. Rather, God's wrath is the proper response of his holiness to unholiness. Somehow we translate this notion of God's holiness and his impassibility to a sense that God's love for us feels much more

like tolerance than it does love. I mean we all know deep down what sinners we are. We all know how unholy we actually are. So I think it's really hard to imagine God passionately loving us like he passionately loved Lazarus. I mean it may seem odd to us that Jesus would be deeply and personally grieved over the loss of a friend. And to be sure his grief was far greater than that, it was far greater than tolerance. It was personal. It was highly emotional. Like I said, his grief is more accurately described not so much as grief but as rage, rage against the whole idea of death itself.

The great Bible scholar of the last century B.B. Warfield wrote an essay on the emotions of Jesus entitled "*The Emotional Life of Our Lord.*" This is what he had to say about Jesus' reaction to Lazarus's death. He says: "What John tells us, in point of fact, is that Jesus approached the grave of Lazarus, in a state, not of uncontrollable grief, but of irrepressible anger. He did respond to the spectacle of human sorrow abandoning itself to its unrestrained expression, with quiet, sympathetic tears: 'Jesus wept' but the emotion which tore his breast and clamored for utterance was just rage. But John gives us to understand that the external expression of our Lord's fury was markedly restrained: Its manifestation fell far short of its real intensity. He even traces for us the movements of his inward struggle: 'Jesus,

therefore, when he saw her wailing, and the Jews that had come with her wailing, was enraged in spirit and troubled himself' and wept. The spectacle of the distress of Mary and her companions enraged Jesus because it brought poignantly home to his consciousness the evil of death, its unnaturalness, its 'violent tyranny'. In Mary's grief, he 'contemplates the general misery of the whole human race' and burns with rage against the oppressor of men. Inextinguishable fury seizes upon him; his whole being is discomposed and perturbed; and his heart, if not his lips, cries out."

See, Warfield goes on to describe emotional states that belong to Jesus that we very seldom attribute to him. You know pity and compassion, yeah, sure. Annoyance? Exasperation? Even threats? Not so much. But all of those emotional states are there and they're all attributed to Jesus. I mean Jesus was certainly filled with pity when he sees the crowds that had gathered who had no food in *Matthew 9*. It says: *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.* In *Matthew 14* it says: *When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.* Compassion is simple, I mean, it fits the narrative. We know who Jesus is. But what about annoyance? On more than one occasion the scripture clearly says Jesus was annoyed, indignant with his disciples. They refused to allow the little children to

come to him is one such instance. This is *Mark 10:13*. It says: *And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God."* I think indignance and annoyance is a little too human for our comfort. So is exasperation. You know when Philip asked Jesus to show him and the disciples the father, a clearly exasperated Jesus said this in *John 14*: *"Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

At other times Jesus was stern, even threatening. *Matthew 9:27* says: *And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David."* When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, *"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"* They said to him, *"Yes, Lord."* Then he touched their eyes, saying, *"According to your faith be it done to you."* And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, *"See that no one knows about it."* On the surface that looks rather non threatening but actually the word translated here is a much stronger word than that. In essence it's like Jesus pulling these guys close, *"You see to it that nobody hears about this in no uncertain terms."* He's literally

threatening them, so much so the commentators have a tough time describing it. As Warfield says: "Certainly Jesus is represented here as taking up a menacing attitude, and threatening words are placed on his lips: 'See that thou say nothing to any man,' 'See that no one know it'— a form of speech which always conveys a threat." Jesus is supposed to be the nice guy. It's God the Father supposed to be mean, right? Isn't that the way this thing works? That's the way people understand it, right? I mean at other times the scripture says that Jesus was downright angry. He was angry at the unbelief and the arrogance of the Pharisees. I mean *Mark 3:1* says this: *Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.* He looked around at them with anger. You know, grief or pity or sorrow, compassion, we can readily ascribe those things to Jesus, but anger, threats, annoyance, even rage, that's a much harder pill to swallow. But all of these were part of what it meant to Jesus to assume human flesh. And in so doing he assumed the full array of human



emotions. And I never gave full thought to what that entailed until Dane Ortlund, in his book on Jesus entitled *Gentle and Lowly*, wonderful book, I recommend it for everyone, he opens up exactly what Jesus' emotional life must have been like, and he gives an example. This is his example. He says: "Perhaps an example would clarify. I remember walking the streets of Bangalore, India, a few years ago. I had just finished preaching at a church in town and was waiting for my ride to arrive. Immediately outside the church grounds was an older man, apparently homeless, sitting in a large cardboard box. His clothes were tattered and dirty. He was missing several teeth. And what was immediately most distressing was his hands. Most of his fingers were partially eaten away. It was clear they hadn't been damaged by an injury but had simply been eaten away over time. He was a leper. What happened in my heart in that moment? My fallen, prone-to-wander heart? Compassion. A little, anyway. But it was tepid compassion. The fall has ruined me, all of me, including my emotions. Fallen emotions not only sinfully overreact; they also sinfully under react. Why was my heart so cool toward this miserable gentleman? Because I am a sinner."

I can certainly relate to what he's saying. I mean how many times have we seen someone or heard of some kind of situation and made excuses for why they were in that state or why we're not

responsible. I mean how many times have our emotions been used to shut down or diminish God's Holy Spirit? I mean try to imagine what it must have been like to have the full complement of every emotion that we have but to have them unhampered by sin in any way. I mean imagine letting the full range of emotions enter into your being clearly unfettered in any way by defense mechanisms or self-protection while at the same time having the ability to be perfectly expressed, and you get a sense of what Jesus experienced emotionally. Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, it contains a whole gamut of emotions from the weeping that Jesus did at the site of Jerusalem to the opposite reaction that he had when he came down the mountain and actually entered into the temple. That's a whole nother story. *Luke 19* says: *And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers."* John adds to Luke's barebones description these words: *The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written,*

*"Zeal for your house will consume me."*

So just how did the temple become a house of trade? You see every male Israelite had to pay a yearly temple tax of one shekel or a half shekel. The problem was that they had to pay -- not only that he had to pay it but he had to pay it in Palestinian silver. And at this time there were all kinds of coins that were out there, there were Persian coins, Tyrian coins, Syrian coins, Egyptian coins, Greek and Roman coins and they had all had to be exchanged for Palestinian silver. That was the money changer's job. So typical of many Middle Eastern business exchanges, there's all the constant din of the haggling that went on. So in order to put Jesus' response into context, you first have to picture the scene. Understand that the temple was the sacred residence of the presence of God. This is the place where his servants acknowledged his greatness and their sinfulness. It was the place to offer God a sacrificial substitute that pointed to the blood atonement that could only be had at the cross. It was the most sacred place on the planet, the place where the creator of the universe consented to meet with his creation. Well, that was the theory. The practice was an entirely different story. You see, years and years had dulled the senses of the people and it turns out they no longer had any fear of God whatsoever and absolutely no respect. The temple had become a bazaar and the silence of worship had been

replaced with the din of trade and haggling and argument. In addition, running right alongside the haggling of the coin changers was an ongoing cattle auction. You see there in the temple were folks who judged whether or not the sacrificial animals were up to par, whether or not they had a blemish. And frequently they would reject an animal that was brought there for sacrifice. So in order to preclude having to carry your animal a great deal of distance only to have it rejected, the temple started selling animals itself right there on site for your convenience. And what had started out probably with the best of intentions soon degenerated into literally a cattle auction. So understand, this was supposed to be the most sacred place on the planet. And now that same sacred place is full of dirt and noise and filth and bellowing animals, it's thick with the stench of dung and urine.

It goes on to say: *And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."* I mean here we see Jesus, he's flipping over tables and he's tumbling over the seats of those who

sold pigeons and he's forbidding anyone from carrying anything through the temple because at this time the merchants were using the temple as a shortcut between the city of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Folks, it doesn't get more outrageous than this, I mean, merchants would actually drive their carts with their animals and their wares through the temple in order to save the trouble of having to go around it. Hence the text says: *And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.* Now put that into context. Imagine a dog walker deciding they're going to walk a pack of dogs through here during communion because they don't want to go around the block. And this building is not sacred. It's the people here who are sacred, but back then that temple was sacred. It was where God and man met or God allowed man to atone for his sin and the people were making a mockery of that.

So before you accuse Jesus of losing his self-control, consider that the God who was due all worship, honor and respect is now receiving huge doses of scorn and derision and mockery but it's not from the devil and it's not from his enemies and it's not from the pagan world, it's from his own chosen people. Jesus Christ was God himself and if he had entered that temple and called down ten thousand angels to purge it with fire, the whole universe would have shouted, "Holy! Holy! Holy!" but he didn't. Instead he exhibited profound gentleness and profound self-control. Yeah, he

made a whip and he overturned the tables and he drove out the money changers, so where's the self-control in that? I mean didn't Jesus simply lose it? I mean isn't self-control supposed to be one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit and didn't Jesus lose control? But remember the definition. What is self-control as a fruit of the Spirit? Self-control is the placing of the control of my will under the power of the Holy Spirit. May I suggest to you that the Holy Spirit of God was righteously outraged as well? I mean if ever there was a time when Father, Son and Holy Spirit altogether practiced astonishing self-control, it was in that temple that was now a cesspool. Jesus' reaction was clearly deeply emotional and yet it perfectly expressed his heart.

Here's how Dane Ortlund describes it. He says this: "What about driving the money changers out of the temple? That wasn't exactly a very gentle thing to do. How does his heart fit with that? We're actually told that Jesus made the whip himself (John 2:15). Picture him there, off alone, weaving back and forth, calmly constructing the weapon by which he would ferociously drive out the money changers, flipping over their tables. But why did he do this? Because they had perverted the use of the temple. This was the house of God, the one place where sinners could come and offer sacrifices and enjoy fellowship with God, reassurance of his favor and grace. It was to be a place of prayer, of blessed interchange

between God and his people. The money changers were the ones doing the real overturning -- overturning the temple from a place to know and see God to a place to make money. What we are saying is that, yes, Christ got angry and still gets angry, for he is the perfect human, who loves too much to remain indifferent. And this righteous anger reflects his heart, his tender compassion. But because his deepest heart is tender compassion, he is the quickest to get angry and feels anger most furiously -- and all without a hint of sin tainting that anger." (Ortlund, Dane C.. Gentle and Lowly (p. 110). Crossway. Kindle edition.)

See, perfect compassion feels deeper than we will ever feel and reaction stronger than we will ever react. And so Jesus with perfect unfiltered motion can look at us and love us more deeply than we could ever possibly imagine. Does God love everyone that way? Well the answer is yes and no. Yes, there is a level of love that God expresses to everyone. Jesus himself said of his Father in *Matthew 5*: "*For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*" But here's the question: Does God love me, does he love me emotionally the same way that he loved Lazarus? Well, if you're one of his, if you are one of his sheep that he laid his life down for, he has an emotional love for you that you can't even begin to grasp. It goes farther and is more passionate and more profound than anything

you'll ever guess. *Hebrews 12:2* says: *Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.* What do you think the joy was that was set before him that made him willing to endure something as awful as shameful as the cross? Child of God, it was you and I who were the source of that joy. Our ransom and our rescue and the glory that it brought to the Father caused God himself to burst with a love that was clearly emotional.

One of my favorite pastors is a name man by the name of Sam Storms. He's written quite a few books. He really has been focused in on this idea of the emotions of Jesus. And one of the things that he says which really stuck me as so true, he says, "Why we don't really enjoy God is because we really don't believe that he enjoys us." That's just what the enemy wants you to believe, but that's not what the scripture proclaims. Palm Sunday is just the introduction to the greatest testimony the world has ever witnessed of the greatest love that was ever poured out. And next week you'll see just how the apostle John could say in *1 John 3:1*: *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!* Let's pray.

*Father, I just again, I acknowledge how incredibly difficult it is for us to fathom the love that you have for us, that you would be*



*excited about, in love with, overwhelmed with, joyful at your love for us. It's hard for us to grapple with. We see ourselves, we see what wretches we are and how can you love someone like that? We just don't get it, Lord. We don't get the extent of the cross, the extent of what you have paid for us and the extent of the fact that it is done and paid for, freeing you up to express a love that we barely understand. We don't really enjoy you, Father, because we think you don't enjoy us. So I ask this morning as we are going into the Easter season that you would give us renewed a sense of the love that you have for us just in what you did for us. Give us the ability to enter this week into just what it is you did for us, all of that because of the joy that was set before you. And we are that joy. Give us the ability to experience it and to share it, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*