Series: The Story

Message: Chapter 26 “The Hour of Darkness”

Text: Matthew 26-27; Mark 14-15; Luke 22-23; John 13-14; 16-19

Theme:

Date: April 1, 2012

Location: Christ Community EFC

[Slide 1]

This Sunday is called Palm Sunday. According to the traditional church calendar Palm Sunday is day we celebrate the Triumphant Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

If you are visiting with us this morning we have been following the Story. The Story is a chronological version of the Bible. So far it has taken us from creation to what is covered in this week’s chapter, the Last Supper and Good Friday.

In the process we have seen God’s amazing upper story of His plan to restore to Himself a people who love Him and how God has worked out this story through the lower story of the lives of the people in the Bible.

**In fact, if you would please turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter 11**.

In an effort to keep up with our reading we won’t be spending much time talking about Palm Sunday, per-say. But I do want to start here because this is where the final week of Jesus’ earthly ministry begins.

Last week I asked “How would you introduce Jesus?” We didn’t get to it but last week’s chapter ended with Jesus being introduced by the crowds as he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

This event is recoded in all four of the Gospels but in Mark chapter 11 and verse 8 we read that “**Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields**.”

The Apostles John tells us that there were in fact palm branches. That is where the name for Palm Sunday comes from. Hence all the Palms and decorations thanks to Mickie and Gini.

The Palm branch was a national symbol and was used to symbolize victory. And it was a national king that the people were looking for.

Mark goes on in 11:9-10 to tell us that “**Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!"** (Hebrew meaning “Please save” or “Save now”)

**"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"**

**10 "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"**

**"Hosanna in the highest!**"

Again John adds the phrase “**Blesses is the King of Israel**”.

That’s how the week begins…but it’s a long way from where it ends. In less than a week Jesus goes from being **celebrated** to being **condemned**.

On Monday Jesus returns to Jerusalem and He enters the Temple and chases out the corrupt money-changers. This shows His Messianic authority (*My Father's House*) and fulfills another prophecy that implies the Messiah will appear there suddenly and take possession of it. (See Mal. 3:1).

Tuesday is a day of controversy and teaching in parables. Jesus personally confronts the authorities and defends His claims to be the Messiah.

That day ends with Jesus pronouncing a curse on the city of Jerusalem and announcing that the Kingdom will be taken away from the nation.

On their return to Bethany the disciples are loaded with questions. Jesus stops at the Mount of Olives overlooking the temple, and gives the Olivet Discourse. See Matt. 24, 25; Lk.21:5ff.

The Olivet Discourse is a detailed prophecy largely about the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the temple due to the rejection of Jesus as Messiah by the Jewish authorities.

Wednesday of that week is a silent day. After an exhausting day of controversy, Jesus more than likely spent that day resting and visiting with His intimate friends.

And that brings us to Thursday. During the day Thursday preparation were made for the Passover.

[Slide 2]

**I. The Last Supper**

Judas may have also utilized this time for his betrayal. Our chapter last week ended by quoting from Luke 22:1-6:

“**Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, 2 and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. 3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. 4 And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. 5 They were delighted and agreed to give him money. 6 He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present**.

Now I would like you to watch this:

Show Video: The Last Supper

Communion: [Video: “Painted Communion” on screen—no sound, during communion]

[Slide 3] After communion as I step back up on stage

So after supper Jesus and His disciples head out of the city as we read in Mark 14:32-34:

“**They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch**."

Take a look at this:

Show Video: The Garden

Fallen asleep - The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak

Judas kind of gets a bad rap. No one ever names their son Judas. I know Peters and Johns and Matthews and even Andrews but do you know a Judas?

But the truth be told, we all have a little Judas in us. How do we betray Him every day…how quickly do we run?

It’s easy to say well the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak and keep on betraying the truth of what Jesus has done for us.

He died to save you from your sin, not just the consequences of your sins but to free you from the power that sin had over you.

I would love to tell you that I have fought for Him, I ran

But, I have crucified Jesus.

After Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested by the temple a series of 6 trials begin.

In Mark 14 we read starting with verse 55 that Jesus was taken before:

**The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any.**

**56 Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. 57 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'" 59 Yet even then their testimony did not agree.**

**60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?"**

**61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"**

**62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."**

**63 The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. 64 "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death.**

**65 Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophesy!" And the guards took him and beat him**.

Then Jesus was taken before Pilate where He was found innocent. He is then taken to Herod who also finds Him innocent.

Finally Jesus is taken back to Pilate who once again finds Him innocent but gives in under pressure, perhaps fearing an uprising.

Take a look at this:

Show Video: Golgotha

[Slide 4]

About 9:00 AM. Jesus is crucified on a hill called *The Skull* outside the city. While we cannot know for certain it is likely that this is the site where God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac.

At noon, the sky becomes dark. The darkness is highly symbolic of the Father turning His back on the one He had earlier called *My beloved son*.

During that time our Savior experienced total separation from the Father for us*. He felt what it is to be utterly forsaken by God.*

Then at 3:00 PM Jesus utters the most important words to believers when he cries with a loud voice: *It is finished*. The phrase literally means *Paid in full*.

The spotless Son of God became sin for us!

The words of Isaiah 53:5-6 are fulfilled: “**But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all**.

Jesus is the Passover Lamb. At exactly the time that the lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple Jesus died on the cross for you and for me.

And the veil is rent or ripped in the Temple (Mk. 15:38).

We are all guilty. We all deserve our punishment! But in Christ you are forgiven!

There is an old spiritual called “Were You There?” Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

I am going to ask the worship team to come up and lead us in that song as we close.

And as they come up let me ask, where you there? Oh, no not physically but spiritually.

Where you there when Jesus, the Son of God, looked down from the cross and said Father forgive them?

Where you there when He said it is finished—paid in full?