

WHAT JESUS WAS DOING DURING HIS LAST WEEK ON EARTH  
PALM SUNDAY  
DR. ROGER BARRIER  
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SLIDE #1: Join us for Easter week: Palm Sunday (child: "This is the day they drove the nail through Jesus' palms.")

Black Friday; Sunday resurrection

Speak to seekers and Casas' folks re Invest and invite.

While there are many different aspects of the last week of Christ preceding the resurrection, I have chosen today to focus on only two: Jesus' death on the cross for the sins of the world and His compassion for people.

I hope this sermon gives us a deeper appreciation for the work of Christ and a motivation of our love for those around us.

I will do this in the context of the events that occurred during the last days of Jesus on earth.

SLIDE #2: THE WEEK BEFORE THE WEEK TWO CRITICAL EVENTS OCCURRED.

1. Jesus revealed His Father's and His heart of compassion for a man who was born blind.
2. He raised Lazarus back to life which led directly to the crucifixion.

SLIDE #3: 3. Jesus revealed His Father's and His heart of compassion for a man who was born blind.

SLIDE #4: John 9:1-6: As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life...." 6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Jesus was filled with compassion at the sight of the man who was born blind.

The disciples, on the other hand, only seemed interested in analyzing whose sin brought on this affliction. The Disciples were seeking to judge.

Who would you rather have taking care of your family? The disciples who wanted to know, "Who sinned"? Or, Jesus who looked at him at compassion and restored his sight?

If we are going to be moved with compassion instead of by judgment, we need to get in touch with the sufferings of Christ.

Pastor at G-6: "How can I be a good comforter? I just don't have much compassion."

Spend time with hurting people.

Enter into the sufferings of Jesus and begin to get His heart for Lost and Hurting people.

SLIDE #5: I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings ..." (Philippians 3:10).

How many want to know Christ?  
How many want to know the power of His resurrection?  
How many want to share in the fellowship of his sufferings?

SLIDE #6: AIDs victim in San Francisco

The trembling man shaking hands with me after church was hiding something. He asked for an appointment and I agreed to meet with him. Later that afternoon we again shook hands and I noticed how wet and sweaty were his palms. He soon revealed that the AIDS virus was coursing through his body. Immediately, I stopped thinking about Him. All I could think of was me. These were the early days of the AIDS epidemic. The medical community was still sorting out how the virus was transmitted. Sex could do it; that was already proven. How about kissing? Or sweat? Those two avenues were still under investigation. I slowly spread the fingers of my right hand, the one now intermingling my sweat with his. As he poured out his heart, confessing his illicit sexual lifestyle, wondering if God could ever forgive him and bring restoration and healing to his body, I was strangely unmoved. All I could think about was getting to the restroom to wash my hand of his sweat. I held my fingers stiffly apart, not wanting to risk pressing any of his sweat up tight against my skin. I said perfunctorily the things a pastor is supposed to say as I planned how to end the session as soon as possible and avoid shaking his hand again as I made my way to the sink. I am not proud of my behavior. I had little or no compassion for him. I did not even really care “who sinned?” All I wanted to do was wash my hands.

Have you ever entered an AIDs clinic?

It is so painful. Babies, health care professionals, pregnant women, drug addicts, hemophiliacs, homosexuals. Went to pray, one of first questions is, “I wonder how they got it?”

God said, “This is your John 9 encounter. You have been asking, ‘Who sinned?’ in contrast with a savior who would come through here and be moved with compassion for all the patients.”

God began to tenderize my heart to care for people I had never cared for before.  
By the time I left the clinic I was broken by what was in my heart.

Several years later I visited an AIDS clinic. I entered wondering as I walked the halls, “who sinned?” As far as I was concerned, most of these people didn’t have to be here. Their AIDS was a direct result of their sinful lifestyles. With each passing moment, my attitude changed. I saw some involved in the gay and lesbian lifestyle. But, I also saw some hemophiliacs, some health care workers, some children and babies. As I saw the suffering I thought of John 9. Would I ever stop asking, “who sinned?” and finally be moved with compassion for the people. Suddenly, it did not matter, anymore, how they “got it.” My heart ached as I looked into the confused, hopeless, hurting eyes of men, women and children facing the fight of their lives. I began to sense how Christ was feeling about the suffering in their lives. He was grieving for them just as he grieved over the blind man in John 9. The whole experience was breaking my heart. I wanted to comfort the hurting people. On a deeper level, I wanted to comfort Christ as He grieved over the people He made whose lives were not turning out at all as He

As we enter into what Paul called the “fellowship of His sufferings”, we feel what Jesus feels.  
We hurt for others just like Jesus hurts for them! “Entering into the fellowship of His sufferings” opens the door for true compassion.

SLIDE #7: 2. He raised Lazarus back to life which led directly to the crucifixion.

John 11:1-44: Lazarus is dead. “Where were you? If you had been here, my brother would not have died.” Approaches the tomb—sees all the weeping, knows it won’t last—miracle about to occur--Jesus wept. Can you feel that?

Many of Mary’s friends put their faith in Jesus.

Scared the church leaders! Pharisees and Sadducees: At that moment they put into place a plan to put Him to death.

SLIDE #8 JOHN 11:49-50: Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! 50 You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

SLIDE #9: JOHN 11:51-53: He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, 52 and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. 53 So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

Less than two weeks before the crucifixion, perhaps on Monday before His triumphant Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem, Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick. When He finally arrived in Bethany Lazarus had been dead in the grave for the past four days (John 11). The main street of Bethany was lined with mourners as Jesus approached. Martha was the first to greet Him. "Lord," she said, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Do you ever wonder just how she said that? I wonder if there were not some hurt and anger behind those words: "Where were you? You should have been here! We sent for you four days ago. Jerusalem is only thirty minutes away. What were you doing? Lazarus was one of your best friends. I know he will be resurrected one day; but we wish he were here now." Have you ever wondered that her accosting of Jesus might well have hurt His sensitive heart?

When Mary heard Jesus had come she came and knelt at His feet. She said essentially the same thing as Martha, but the Greek construction she used implied a little different approach. She may well have said something like this: "If you had been here, my brother would not have died; but, it's all right, we will all see him again in the resurrection."

Then follows the shortest, easiest to remember verse in the Bible: "Jesus wept." I used to wonder why He was crying. After all, He knew that Lazarus would soon be alive again and every one would be shouting and rejoicing. It was not until I closed my eyes and meditated on the scene that I saw Mary's tears and the weeping of all their friends. Then I understood that the sensitive Savior was moved deeply with compassion. He wept. What does it do to your heart to realize that the shortest, easiest to remember verse in the Bible is about the God Who weeps?"

Let's meditate for a moment on the human hurts of Christ and see if we can enter into the fellowship of sharing His sufferings.

## THE LAST WEEK

### SLIDE #10: SUNDAY

Palm Sunday, Triumphant entry into the Golden Gate in Jerusalem

High point of ministry: Feelings of Jesus heart.

Even rocks would cry out! Receiving praise and enjoying it.

Sunday afternoon drove the Money changers out of the temple: extremely angry.

Spent every night of last week at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany just over the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem.

### SLIDE #11: MONDAY AND TUESDAY

Sparring with the Pharisees and Sadducees

Paying taxes to Caesar

Who will marry whom in Heaven?

The greatest commandment: Love God, others and self.

Tuesday—late afternoon: Woes to the Pharisees

"Shut the kingdom in men's faces"

"Travel over land and sea to make a convert and then make him twice the son of Hell that you are."

"You are like whitewashed tombs, clean on outside, filthy dirty on inside"

SLIDE #12: Matthew 26:1-4: When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2 "As you know, the Passover is two days away — and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." 3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, 4 and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him.

### SLIDE #13: WEDNESDAY NIGHT

Mary anointing Jesus We know what He was thinking: "She is the only one in the room who has figured out that I am going to die. I have told these disciples for the last three years that I was going to Jerusalem to die and they still don't get it. She is the only one close enough to read my Heart. Now she is anointing my body with perfume for burial while I am still alive and can enjoy it!"

Judas, "What a waste!" See if you can feel this? "Leave her alone . . . she has anointed my body for burial." Later on the cross, "What is that I smell? Can you sense the feeling and emotion.

The next evening, less than one week before the cross, Jesus was enjoying dinner in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Suddenly, Mary violated the room of male sanctuary, took a bottle of pure nard and anointed Jesus. I want you to imagine those two in your mind as Mary knelt again at Jesus' feet. Picture Jesus however you like: home-spun robe; long-flowing, chestnut-colored hair, parted in the middle; olive-colored skin; sandals on His feet. Do you see the look of loving adoration on Mary's face as she gazed intently up into His eyes? Now look at the expression on Jesus' face. We know what He was thinking: "She is the only one in the room who has figured out that I am going to die. I have told these disciples for the last three years that I was going to Jerusalem to die and they still don't get it. She is the only one close enough to read my Heart. Now she is anointing my body with perfume for burial while I am still alive and can enjoy it!" I have often thought that when I die some people will most likely send flowers as an expression of sorrow and love. But, I decided long ago that I would rather have one rose, right now, that I could smell and enjoy, than 10,000 after I am dead and gone. Wouldn't you? Mary brought Him roses while He was still alive and could enjoy them. Suddenly, sinisterly, Judas snarled, "Jesus, tell her to stop! She is wasting that perfume on you!" Then all the other disciples joined in criticizing her! Surely, these words stung Him deeply! I used to think He spoke the next sentence with frustration and anger. But now, I think not. I believe He was filled with sorrow as He said, "Oh, Judas. Did you have to spoil it? I was really enjoying this moment. She is the only one who has figured out what is going on. She is anointing my body for burial while I am still alive and can enjoy it. What she has done will be spoken as a memorial to her until I come again."

### SLIDE #14: THURSDAY NIGHT

#### The fumble in the Upper Room

Classic passage on comfort: "Let not your heart be troubled, I go to prepare a place for you that you may be with me always."

Thomas replies, "We don't know where you are going; how can we get there?" You don't think that hurt.

Phillip says, "Yeah! We don't even know who you are! Show us the Father and we will be satisfied."

Philip, have I been so long with you and you don't even know Who I am!"

See if you can feel this pain. He was making His final ministry handoff before the cross and they are fumbling the ball on the goal line. What if they failed to carry on the Work?

Jesus: "If you have seen me you have seen the Father."

The next night He was sharing His last words with the Disciples. He pronounced that classic passage on comfort from John 14:1-6: "Let not your hearts be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me. . . . I go to prepare a place for you that you may be with me always. You know where I am going and you know how to get there."

Thomas fearfully replied, "No! We don't know where you are going, and we don't know how to get there." Imagine how much that must have hurt. Immediately Philip spoke in confusion, "Yeah, we don't even know who you are!"

“Philip, have you been so long with me and you still don’t know who I am! (I wonder to how many Christians Christ might say those same words today?) Don’t miss this, men, if you have seen me you have seen the Father!”

SLIDE #15: The Lord’s supper

This is my body...blood...Then, I imagine few if any in this room know what happened next!

Luke recorded the moment: “An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest” (Luke 9:46).

He was giving His life away for the world and all they could think about was which one of them was the greatest. Think how that hurt!

SLIDE #16: The Garden of Gethsemane He confessed to His men, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Watch and pray” (Matthew 26:38).

Did you just read those words? Or did you stop to consider how He said what He said? He was getting ready to die. He was mourning and grieving: “I am about to die.” Do you now hear the pain and agony?

What He wanted was for His men to put their arms around Him and comfort Him. But, they did not do it. Stay here and pray with me.”

Then he returned to the disciples and found them sleeping. “Can you not pray with me one hour?” That is a hurting savior. He experienced the pain of rejection. They’re all asleep.

So He returned to pray for another hour. This time the intensity was so powerful that the sweat capillaries in His forehead burst and He sweated drops of blood from His forehead. “Father, is there any other way we can do this?” He pleaded. “Nevertheless, Your will be done.” Fortunately, God sent angels to comfort Him.

He returned to discover them sleeping once again:

SLIDE #17: “Wake up! The betrayer is at hand.”

Sure enough Judas was guiding the band of soldiers to arrest Him. Judas walked directly to Jesus and kissed Him. Listen to the next line: “Must you betray me with a kiss?” Do you hear the pain in His voice? Judas could have pointed, or called out Jesus’ name. Instead he kissed him. By the way, this was no ordinary kiss. The Greek word used is the one reserved for a passionate lovers kiss.

SLIDE #18: FRIDAY

Shortly thereafter the trials, mockings, beatings and crown of thorns commenced. He held His hands still as the nails penetrated His flesh. Can you imagine the sorrow as He was put to death by the very men He had created? Can you imagine His feelings of rejection: “He came unto His own and His own received Him not” (John 1:10-12). Then, the cross slammed down into place.

Now listen to Him—enter further into the fellowship of His sufferings.

SLIDE #19: He is nailed to the cross: He looks down to see the soldiers gambling for His robe and he prays, Father, forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing.”

SLIDE #20: To the thief: “Surely, today, you will be with me in Paradise.”

SLIDE #21: Then He looked down and saw His mother whom He loved: ‘Woman, behold your son.’

Then he said to John, the only disciple who stuck around, “John, behold your mother—take care of her for me.”

SLIDE #22: Darkness covers the earth: “My God, My, God, why have you forsaken me?”

SLIDE #23: “I thirst.”

SLIDE #25: He cried with a loud voice: “It is finished.”

SLIDE #25: “Into your hands I commit my spirit.”

Explain video: bridge, child looking for dad, falls into machinery. Dad’s choice

## **VIDEO**

Two key things going on that last week.

SLIDE #26:1 Sacrificing His life for the sins of the world.

John 10:11: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

SLIDE #27: 2. Let’s move back into the realm of compassion.

Don’t you like to imagine that if you were in the Garden that night with Jesus you would have responded differently than the Disciples did? Can you imagine that you might have put your arms around Jesus and comforted Him in His hurts? Can you see yourself weeping with Him as He wept and praying for Him as He longed for you to hold Him up in prayer? Wouldn’t you like to minister to the needs of a hurting Savior? Sure you would.

You might say, “Well, I can’t do that. That was a long time ago—and I wasn’t there.”

Yes, you can. Jesus said in Matthew 25:34-40: Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, ... [enter] the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

SLIDE #28: Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?”

SLIDE #29: The King will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Worship Song.

Glenn