

<i>Date Preached</i>	28-Mar-2021	<i>Date Initiated</i>	16-Mar-2021
<i>Where Preached</i>	SAK	<i>Appointed Readings</i>	Pass/Palm Sun, Yr B

[no squib or invocation this day]

In the end, it all went down just like always, didn't it? Yes, I saw them all, from up there on the Cross: all the usual characters who contribute—so predictably; even matter-of fact-ly, it seems ... to the regular perversion of My Father's justice. It doesn't take many, does it? But still, if they all band together to spew the right words and foment a little fear, the victim's fate is sealed ... the slave's sentence is swift and sure.

[pause, as if listening to a question]

Who is "they"? You don't know them by now?

- Well, I'm pretty sure you'd recognize those who hold power ... who have a tight grip on the political, military, economic or even the religious levers of society. When these folks detect a threat to their precious status ... sense someone might desire even an ounce of what's '*rightfully theirs*' ("rightfully," of course, being a code-word for "indisputably") ... like lightning, they conspire to silence his voice; or better yet, take away his air altogether.
- And I know you're familiar with the mobs. Sure, they're all swagger and indignation on the surface, but underneath? Sheep in wolves' clothing. A highly suggestible army of pawns: ready—eager, even—to be exploited to serve the powerful, who don't actually care a whit about them. The specific cause is often pretty secondary: The privileged and powerful manufacture some pretext—any will do!—to whip up some outrage, and the mob rises up like a machine.

[pause, as if listening to another question]

Did no one come to my defense? Did anyone stand up for me?

- Well, there are those who *thought* they did—armchair advocates, I call them: the folks who say all the right things—probably even believe most of them, too!—but who don't actually come out to help anyone: just not gonna risk it. They stay on the sidelines, heads pumped full of righteous ideas and mouths sputtering in indignation ... but no gumption—no conviction. And worse, if, somehow, they *do* get swept up in all the chaos ... if they're outed or suspected ... made to *declare* what they believe ... they're likely to betray pretty much everything (and everyone) they claim to hold dear, to protect their own hides.
 - Now, let me be fair: There are always a few who put their money where their mouth is: who come to soothe the suffering ... who help carry the cross of the innocent even as they're being railroaded to death. They are the blessed, to be sure. But make no mistake: This tiny minority doesn't have the standing to speak back to the privileged or the numbers be heard over the shrieking of the mob.

[as if musing ...] Yes, I saw them all from up there on the cross ... from my most exalted death-perch: all the characters you'll find at every lynching, whether state-sanctioned or otherwise. I saw the powerful rubbing their hands in the greedy anticipation of evil ... and the mobs braying and

screaming the ginned-up hatred they'd been so carefully taught. And the armchair folks? Well, I looked at them, too, but they couldn't meet my gaze.

[pause, as if gathering a difficult thought]

But do you know who *else* I saw out there ... out past the privileged in their opulent luxury boxes ... out past the mobs, with their faux grievances but all-too-real violence ... out past those who at least *show up*—at least voice *some* opinion? Out past all of that? The great hoard: the *vast majority* of this city's populace, who just went on doing whatever it is they do each day, as I hung there ... dying. I suppose a few might somehow have been genuinely ignorant. But most, let's face it, were desperately hoping they *wouldn't* see anything ... *wouldn't* see Me up there, expiring in agony, being tortured to amuse ... or placate ... the mob. No, I cried out, don't look—don't let yourself see Me! Because if you see Me, you can no longer deny the harrowing truth ... the heinous injustice you want to pretend just doesn't exist.

Sure ... sure ... they've got miles of excuses: too busy ... too tired ... too uninformed ... too conflicted. But you know what? From up there on that cross, I could see not just into their eyes, but also into their souls. And the only thing they're '*too*' ... is *stuck*. Too stuck in the status quo—*don't rock the boat!* Too stuck in their own existence—*hey, I work hard for what I have!* Too stuck in nursing their own grievances to perceive the fundamental injustice that pervades so many others' lives. Too stuck in the as-is of humanity to even imagine the should-be of God ... ***[deflated]*** even as God hung there right before their eyes.

[pause]

You know the thing about being stuck? You can't un-stick yourself. No, eventually, you have to summon to the courage ... or the anger ... or the disgust to ask someone for some help. Maybe this death ... *My* death ... the slaughter of God ... will finally be the one that un-sticks them. At least, as I sit in this dark, dank tomb, that's My fevered prayer.

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