

2018 Lenten Message Series: "I Give Up"

Series Lens: It is traditional to give something up for Lent. Typically, it's a food item, a comfort item or some form of entertainment. While this is a temporary fast (to be picked up again after Lent), we explore the things in our life that ought to be given up for good.

Series verse: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2

Sunday, March 25: Palm Sunday

Title: "I Give Up...My Comfort"

Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

Text: Isaiah 53:5

Theme:

Memory Verse: Isaiah 53:5 "He was pierced for our sins, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed."

Skit: "I Have a Button of Boldness"

Activity: Gather in the lobby and process in waving palm branches.

Exit laying down white surrender flags.

Blurb: Jesus came into Jerusalem on purpose. He came to give up His comfort in order to bring salvation to others. Because of that, Jesus offers us what is far greater than anything we currently have now. Yet we struggle to let go of the good we have now in order to receive the great that Jesus offers. This Sunday we'll tackle giving up our comfort in order to grab a hold of the better plan that God has for us. Come if you need help opening your tight grip!

WORSHIP OUTLINE:

Gathering in the Lobby - Each person gets a palm branch.

Opening Song: *Sing to the King* -Sanctify

Welcome: -Pastor David

We gather out here in the lobby because we want to begin worship in a special way.

Today we celebrate when Jesus finally arrived in Jerusalem.

The people had heard he was a great man, who talked about God and did amazing miracles.

As He approached, they gathered along the road into Jerusalem.

They welcomed Him as a king, by cutting palm branches and waving them.

Then they joined His procession and followed Him.

We're doing to join in that procession today!

We're going to walk down the central aisle waving our palm branches.

Then at the front, we will go left or right, and then back up the side aisles to our seats

But don't sit...keep standing, and keep waving your palm branches!

Everyone down the central aisle, then across the front, & back up the side aisles to our seats.

We begin by listening to the story,
and then we will respond with the call to worship in your bulletin insert.

Everyone ready?

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem!

Matthew 21:1-10

1 When Jesus and his disciples came near Jerusalem, he went to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives and sent two of them on ahead. 2 He told them, "Go into the next village, where you will at once find a donkey and her colt. Untie the two donkeys and bring them to me. 3 If anyone asks why you are doing that, just say, 'The Lord needs them.' Right away he will let you have the donkeys."

4 So God's promise came true, just as the prophet had [foretold],

5 "Announce to the people of Jerusalem: 'Your king is coming to you!

He is humble and rides on a donkey. He comes on the colt of a donkey.'"

6 The disciples left and did what Jesus had told them to do. 7 They brought the donkey and its colt and laid some clothes on their backs. Then Jesus got on.

8 Many people spread clothes in the road, while others put down [palm*] branches which they had cut from trees." [*See John 12:13]

Turn to your call to Worship!

Verse 9 . . .

[Call to Worship (in the Lobby) (Matt. 21:9-11)]

Leader: "Some people walked ahead of Jesus and others followed behind. They were all shouting,"

People: "Praise God! for the Son of David! Please save us!

God bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Praise God in heaven above!"

Leader: "Who can this be?"

People: "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Leader: Then, let us follow Him!

People process into the sanctuary, waving palm branches and singing.

Procession with Palms - *People process in, singing, following Sanctify leaders, down the central aisle waving palm branches. They then walk across the front of the church and go to their seats using the two side aisles.*

Worship Music Set: - Sanctify

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

Celebrate

The Lord's Prayer

PP: Memory Verse:

"He was pierced for our sins, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed." -Isaiah 53:5

Memory Verse:

During Lent, we're giving up things that keep us from the peace and joy God gives.

That's included excuses, addictions, anxiety, our plans, and our truth. Today we work to give up our comfort. We follow Jesus, who came to Jerusalem giving up His comfort in

order to win salvation for us. Our memory verse explains that powerfully today, a verse I want you to say every day this Holy Week, as you remember Jesus' sacrifice. It is Isaiah 53:5. Let's try it together...

"He was pierced for our sins, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed." -Isaiah 53:5

Skit: "I Have Here a Button of Boldness" (Andrew & 3 others)

Host: Andrew

Participant 1: Sandy Coley (with cell phone), chooses to press the button!

Participant 2: Mike Hansen (with wads of money), chooses not to press the button.

Participant 3: Lily Betker (with mirror), chooses not to press the button.

Participant 4: Armando Lorenzi (with stress ball), chooses to press the button!

Prayers: (David)

Pray for Lee Dugdale's retirement.

Prayer Vigil this Holy Week

C.R.O.S.S. Prayer [Focus on "Stretch: Push us into boldness."]

Come: Pour out your Holy Spirit on your church.

Renew: Awaken in us a hunger for more of You.

Oneness: Bind us together to the work God is calling us to.

STRETCH: PUSH US INTO BOLDNESS.

Send: Give us your heart for the lost.

Offering: *Do Not Conform* - Sanctify

Bumper Video

Message Part #1: "I Give Up...My Comfort"

PP#1: I Give Up ...

My Comfort

"He was pierced for our sins, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed." -Isaiah 53:5

I Give Up ... My Comfort! Isaiah 53:5 "He was pierced for our sins, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed."

PP#2: *Image of Jesus riding into Jerusalem, with people waving palm branches.*

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, it was a quite a parade! Jesus the miracle worker was coming! "And, have you heard? , just days before He raised Lazarus back from the dead! This has got to be the one! He is the One sent from God to free God's people! Rome threatens death, but this Jesus can raise the dead! Jesus will lead the rebellion, and push back the Romans! He is the One sent from God! Imagine the miracles! The miracles! We're saved!"

"Praise God! for the Son of David! Please save us!
 God bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Praise God in heaven above!"

The words the people said that day were true. But what they wanted, what they believed, what they meant by those words, was not God's plan.

Yes, Jesus was sent from God. Yes, Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior. Yes, Jesus was the new King, in the royal line of King David of old. Yes, God's help was coming, salvation was at hand. Yes, Jesus brought freedom, and broke the power of slavery.

But Jesus was not coming to be a military savior, to lead a rebellion against Rome. He was not a political leader, who would restore the nation of Israel as a sovereign nation.

PP#3: *Jesus bound standing in front of people shouting when they called to crucify Him.*

And because of that, Jesus' fanfare was short lived...very short lived! By Friday the people gave up on Him, and were so angry, that they handed Him over to be killed.

Jesus wasn't who they hoped He would be. Jesus wasn't the savior they wanted, doing things the way they wanted.

PP#4: 41 As Jesus came to the city and observed it, He wept over it. 42 He said, "If only you knew on this of all days the things that lead to peace. But now they are hidden from your eyes. . . . You didn't recognize the time of God's coming to you." -Luke 19:41-44

Jesus wasn't swayed by the excitement, though. In fact, when He came near Jerusalem, He began to weep. Luke tells this moment, Luke 19:41, "As Jesus came to the city and observed it, He wept over it. He said, 'If only you knew on this of all days the things that lead to peace. But now they are hidden from your eyes. . . . You didn't recognize the time of God's coming to you.'"

You see, God was working a much bigger miracle than a rebellion against Rome. God was working a rebellion against death! Jesus was bringing freedom, not political freedom, but spiritual freedom from the much more cruel slavery of sin! Jesus was ushering in a new kingdom, but not of this world: that time ravages and that passes with history! The Kingdom Jesus brought was God's eternal kingdom, that will stand forever!

The people, even though justified in their anger about the real oppression by Rome, were thinking too small! They had their sights set too low! And because of that, they were missing the amazing miracle that God was doing!

PP#5: I Give Up ... My Comfort!

1. See Jesus as Suffering Servant

The prophecies told of the coming King riding on a donkey's colt. This is not what a great, powerful, military leader rides! A donkey's colt shows humility, modesty, letting others go first. And other passages showed the Savior as a suffering servant! Isaiah 53:5, "He was pierced for our sins, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed." They speak of spiritual healing, not a physical kingdom. But that's what the people wanted!

As we follow Jesus, you and I, we need to see Him as the kind of King He is. Our King rides a donkey's colt. He lets Himself be pierced, and crushed, wounded, and punished wrongly!

Our Jesus is not one who leads political rebellions. Think about that. Jesus didn't come to free us from physical bondage. Is this the Jesus you imagine, that you want?

PP#6: *Image: Xn in a recliner w/exotic drink, or somehow showing how we want comfort from God.*

We are a bit more like those Israelites in Jerusalem than we want to admit! We want Jesus to come and make things better...in our physical lives. We want the comforts of money, health, safety, upward advancements, significant relationships, exciting experiences. "Oh, please, please, please, God, help me...bless me...give this to me."

Now, the problem is that although God's primary work is to save us into eternity by restoring us to Himself, He also, as a side blessing, as a generous God, lavishes physical blessings to most of His people most of the time! Think about it...your life has been pretty good, has it not! God is good! [All the time!]

So, the problem is that we get used to that, those blessings, those comforts, those extra goodies. And we start to focus so much on those that we begin to neglect God's primary work.

We get irritated that God doesn't help us out, the way we want. Then we claim that we really can't see Him or know He's here, because He doesn't spare us from hardships and troubles. If God can fix our problems, and He loves us, then why doesn't He?

Because we are looking for a Jesus who is riding in on a mighty war horse! God's primary work is not to improve our lives in this world! Now, often God does, and then we can come to expect it. But Jesus, riding into Jerusalem, shows us God's main work: fighting sin and death! And that He does not in temporal victory, but through suffering and serving.

PP#7: I Give Up ... My Comfort!

1. See Jesus as Suffering Servant
2. Surrender our Comfort

So, to follow this Jesus, we take up the life of service. We give up our demand for physical comfort. We are grateful as we enjoy God's many physical blessings, yes, but we then must be vigilant against those sneaky desires that creep into our expectations. And every once in a while, like during Lent, as we lay open our lives before God, we have to intentionally and willfully surrender our desire for comforts, and root out our expectations of God's material blessings as the reason for following Jesus.

This is why we fast. This is why we pause. This is why we simplify. We refocus on God's primary work, and we take the Suffering Servant as our Savior. God is more concerned about our character than our comfort. He wants us useful for His primary work on earth. This is why we are here! So, there are times we need to surrender again!

PP#8: *Image of Jesus hanging on the cross, for us to reflect on how Jesus suffered for us.*

There are—for your (*a-hem*) convenience!—white surrender flags out on the pews. Last week we waved them as sign of giving up our truth, so that we could have God's Truth.

I'm going to invite you, right now, to reach out and take a white surrender flag. You may need to move to let the person behind you get theirs out! But take the flag, and hold it. As you do, I invite you, if you are ready, in the quiet of your own hearts and minds, to surrender your physical comfort to Jesus. There's a picture of Jesus hanging on the cross. It's there for you to use to guide

your prayer. Think about how much Jesus surrendered His comfort for you! This is the clearest picture of our God’s character! This is God’s primary work! This is our King! Are you willing to give up, to Him, because of Him!, your need to have your life full of comforts? What do you need to let go of, in order to hold—with both hands!—the flag of surrender? Take a moment, if you will.

[Pause for prayer.]

PP#9: *Image of someone standing on the “controlled descent” platform, like at Forever Florida*

Hang on to your flag. We’re going to use them again at the end of the service.

Last week, when we were on vacation visiting my mother in Florida—I know...it’s very important that I go visit her when it just so happens to be cold here!—we took our kids zip-lining. The first part was what they called a “controlled fall” from a platform seven stories tall! “Controlled” means that your harness is clipped to a pulley that slows your descent as you reach the ground. It makes mental sense. But when you are standing on the platform, looking down seven stories with just hard ground below, everything God put in you to stay safe is screaming, “No!”

The first couple to jump, a black couple, were married. The wife went first. She dropped down whooping and cheering. “So fun!” she said. Her big, muscled, powerful husband...I’m guessing about 30 years old, stood at the edge of the platform, shaking in his boots! It took him three times retreating back to safety before he finally closed his eyes and jumped...screaming like a little girl the whole way down! At the bottom, his wife was merciless in teasing her “big, strong, brave, macho man!” She replayed his screaming—that she had recorded—over and over again on her phone!

Nathan went without too much struggle. And then I saw Rebekah on the edge. She inched forward, then backward. Forward, then backward. Forward...looked down, and Nathan hollered up, “It’s awesome! You’ll love it! Just go!” But, she inched backward again. Then, all of a sudden, the guide gave her a hard push, and sent her flying off the platform!

PP#10: *Image of someone descending on the “controlled descent” platform, like at Forever Florida*

Down at the bottom she told me, “If he hadn’t pushed me, I probably would never have gone!” Did you like it? Was it fun? Are you glad you jumped? “Oh yes, it was amazing! I’m so glad I went. But I don’t think I would have gone if he hadn’t pushed me.”

We are praying for boldness, for God to stretch us out of our comfort. We’re asking God for that push!

And here’s the key: we surrender our comfort because we want to receive a better blessing, the greater plan, that God has in store for us. The danger with comfort is that we settle. We agree to what we have, or know. But our God doesn’t just say, “Give that up!” for no reason. Jesus died on the cross because He wanted to save us—He wanted us!—more than He wanted His comfort. He didn’t endure it all because He’s a wimp, or powerless, or humble. He surrendered because He had His eye on the better prize! He had you in mind as He was crucified! And it’s not that He just swapped with us because He wanted us to live, like some noble, self-sacrificing benefactor. He suffered it all because He wanted us to be with Him! He wanted you to be with Him, forever! You are His prize! Imagine! How does that affect your self esteem?

PP#11: I Give Up ... My Comfort!

1. See Jesus as Suffering Servant
2. Surrender our Comfort
3. Seek the Greater Blessing

Don't settle for a comfortable life! God has an adventure for you...one that comes when you take that leap of faith, and go "all in!" Surrender is not some glum, pointless resignation. It's swapping what admittedly is good, for what is mind-blowingly awesome!

Rebekah yesterday was watching Netflix of *Girl Meets World*. It was the sequel of *Boy Meets World*, where the boy is grown up and now has a daughter. Well, in the episode I caught, the dad and his best friend were talking about their life 15 years before. They were best friends, and back then were so sad to lose their high school lives. But now, as they looked back, they admitted, "Before, that's all we knew, and we didn't want to lose it. But now, what we have now, wife, kids, everything, it's so much better! We never could have imagined!"

PP#12: *Image of someone (perhaps not seeing the face) lifting up empty hands to God showing that the person is open to receiving God's blessing.*

When God calls us to give up our comfort, it's because He has something far better He wants to give us. We need to stop focusing too much on lamenting what we are giving up, and focus more on the amazing blessings God wants to give us! It might not be material blessings, but then, we will be able to keep them after we die!

Jesus wanted the Israelites to receive the eternal salvation He came to achieve, the peace He gives for their hearts. That same Jesus is asking you to step out in boldness and follow Him.

I don't know what it is that you are holding on to with white knuckles. All I can worry about is what I'm gripping! But when we give it up, then we can receive what God wants to give us!

That flag you're holding, it can be your ticket to abundant and eternal life.

And if you just go out to the edge, and tell God you want to jump, the Holy Spirit will give you a push!

Stretch! O God! Push us into boldness!

Amen!

Closing Song: *White Flat* - Sanctify
Wave white flags

PP: Memory Verse

"He was pierced for our sins, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed." -Isaiah 53:5

Announcements:

Wednesday Holy Week service - 5:30 Meal, 6:30 worship, including Holy Communion

Friday Lifeline Good Friday Worship - 7:00 p.m.

Prayer Vigil - 8:00 p.m.

Easter: 6:30 a.m. Sunrise at the lake

8:30 a.m. Breakfast begins

9:00 & 10:00 a.m. Worship

Sign up for Small Groups

Benediction: -Pastor David

We came into worship today, getting all caught up like the crowd, proclaiming Jesus our King
 Yet having met Him, we realize what kind of King He is: a Suffering Servant
 And we've taken up our white surrender flags to give up our own comfort as we follow Him
 So, as we leave, I invite you to follow Him as the King He is.
 Give up your comfort, so you can receive the better plan He has in store for you.
 Let's do that by processing out like we came in.
 Come down the side aisles, waving your surrender flags.
 Then come across the front, and we'll exit out the central aisle.
 The story said that people laid their coats on the ground in front of Jesus as well as palm
 branches.
 Let's lay down our white flags as a sign of surrender, down the central aisle, as we process.
 Keep your palm branches, because you need to continue to claim Jesus is your king. But
 throw down your white flags in surrender, as you commit to live for Jesus!
 If you have mobility concerns, I invite you to take a different way out, not the central aisle!
 But if you want to join the procession, come lay down your white flags in surrender.
 [Benediction] May God the Father, who has an amazing plan in store for you, and Jesus, who brings
 you into God, give you the Holy Spirit, so you can surrender your comfort and embrace the
 future boldly. Amen. Go in peace.

Recessional: *Have It All*

As the song begins, lead the people down the central aisle, laying down the white cloth (walking over it) and waving your palm branches!