



SERMON TITLE The Way of Restoration

SERIES Godly Reset

DATE 4/4/2021

KEY SCRIPTURE Palm Sunday to Resurrection Sunday

SYNOPSIS There is a Way of Restoration, a pattern of how restoration comes about, and we can see it in the Holy Week, the passion of the Christ. There was Palm Sunday and the Triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Then there was Friday, the day of Suffering and Crucifixion. And, finally, there was Sunday... Resurrection!

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ **The Way of Restoration**

Review: Godly Reset... revival; renewal; restoration plus.

There is a way of restoration; a pattern of how restoration comes about, and we can see it in the passion of the Christ. There was Palm Sunday and the Triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Then there was Friday, the day of Suffering and Crucifixion. And, finally, there was Sunday... Resurrection!

☞ In Palm Sunday we can see **The Challenge**.

There was an expectation of a Jewish King who would reestablish the nation of Israel and conquer all her enemies. Indeed, Jesus is the King, but he challenged people's perceptions. He came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. That was unexpected. Conquering kings ride stallions. Right at the beginning of Holy Week, even as he is coming to the city, Jesus is challenging people's preconceived ideas. **He disturbs preconceptions.**

Sometimes we have preconceived ideas, too. We think the Lord will do something a certain way, but he doesn't always do things the way we expect. We pray and ask for a financial breakthrough, expecting someone to be moved by the Lord to anonymously give us cash. Instead, God opens up a new job opportunity which may not be our dream job, but will meet the financial needs we have. He challenges our expectations.

We have preconceived ideas of his visitation. We expect a move of the spirit that stirs up shouting and dancing, but he moves and there is quiet and tears. We expect physical healings, but he brings spiritual healing instead. He sometimes disturbs preconceptions.

☞ **He disrupts practices.** Once Jesus was in Jerusalem he went to visit the temple and almost immediately he displayed anger and overturned the tables of the moneychangers. This was the normal way of operating the temple, but when Jesus came on the scene he disrupted the norm.

When he pours out his spirit upon our gatherings, he may choose to disrupt the normal practices for us as well. We have a typical order of service, which all well and fine. But as the Spirit moves he may have something else in mind. He may disrupt our practices.

☞ **He directs pondering.** He challenges modes of thinking. One of his favorite questions to his followers was, "What do you think?" It wasn't that he needed to know their thoughts. It was that they needed to consider their way of thinking.

You may think you've got everything in order. Your theology is spot on. But then the Holy Spirit enlightens a portion of scripture and you see something differently than ever before. He challenges your thinking.



You think you treat people pretty well and you control your temper. You don't lie or steal. But then the Lord moves in your heart and points out that nasty thought you just had yesterday. He challenges your way of thinking. He directs pondering. He disrupts practices. He disturbs preconceptions. This is part of the Way of Restoration. It's The Challenge.

☞ Another part of the Way of Restoration is seen in Holy Week: **The Change**. In fact, Easter is all about change. It is a dominant theme in the biblical account of Holy Week.

There is a clear pattern here. Things were looking pretty good, but by the end of the week it was about as bad as it could ever get. It went from appealing to appalling in less than a week. There was a drastic change.

On Palm Sunday there was a parade and praises. But by the end of the week that changed to persecution and pain. Jesus was welcomed with shouts of "Hosanna!" and "blessed be the king!" But by the end of the week the crowds were shouting, "We have no king, but Caesar!" and "Crucify! Crucify!"

Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem by a large crowd with palm branches and cloaks lining the path for him. By the end of the week he only had a few disciples with him, and before that last night was up, he was completely alone and abandoned.

At the beginning of the week he was admired and applauded. But by the end of the week he was in agony. If you've seen the movie by Mel Gibson, *The Passion of The Christ*, you have seen a glimpse of the suffering of Christ. He was praised at the beginning of the week, but by the end of the week he was punished severely. He endured a flogging with a cat-o'-nine-tails tearing his flesh so deeply that it typically killed the victim. He was beaten, mocked and spat upon, and finally had nails driven through his hands and feet, pinning him to the old rugged cross. By Friday afternoon, the Lord was dead; and by that evening he was buried in a cave, the entrance sealed with a heavy stone and guarded by Roman soldiers.

There was a dramatic change and it happened in a very short time frame. It went from happy to ☞ horrible, **from rejoicing to rejection, celebration to suffering**, and from admirable to awful in no time. It was a dramatic change. But the change for the worse wasn't the only change in the Easter story.

On Friday, everything went horribly wrong. Even the sky grew dark as Jesus was hanging on the cross. Friday night came and the Lord was dead. But then Sunday morning arrived and things had changed!

It was Friday, and Jesus was nailed to that cross, but then came Sunday and the cross was empty. He wasn't hanging there anymore. On Friday night the tomb was full with the body of Christ, and sealed with a heavy stone, but come Sunday morning, the tomb was empty, with the stone rolled away. On Friday, the Lord was dead, but come Sunday morning Jesus is alive!



It went from gruesome to glory in only three days! There was **darkness and death**, but in no time, there was **daylight and deliverance**. Jesus was crucified, but ultimately conquered death and the grave. He was laid to rest, but ultimately, he was resurrected!

Sometimes, today, people experience changes a lot like this. Especially, when you decide to follow Christ wholeheartedly, things can get rough. Sometimes, there is rejection from family and friends when you get serious about your faith. There may be mocking and even persecution for Christ followers. This is part of the process. It is often included in the Way of Restoration.

But, it's not all bad. Ultimately, Christ followers receive an incredible inheritance. There will be an ultimate deliverance. And, as we talked about last week, there will be a restoration that goes beyond just returning to normal. God has a plan for his people that is beyond our wildest imaginations. We will be changed... in the twinkling of an eye! This is the Way of Restoration.

☞ Another significant part of this Way of Restoration is **The Choice**.

In the bible description of Holy Week and Easter we can see choices everywhere. The Pharisees made a choice. When they looked at Jesus, they saw a threat that had to be **rejected** and removed. So, they arrested him at night, bound him, and led him off to be tried. At his trial, they arranged for people to lie about him, so that he would be condemned. Jesus only told the truth and he had performed countless miracles in daylight, but they chose to condemn him in the dark.

Pilate made a choice. When he investigated Jesus, he saw a vicious crowd of people and **caved to the pressure** of their demands. So, he had Jesus flogged with that cat-o'-nine-tails. The soldiers under his command put the crown of thorns on the Lord's head. They mocked him, spit on him and slapped him over and over. Because of the choice of Pilate, Jesus was tortured, crucified and killed on that cross.

Even Jesus made a choice. He saw the end results of his death and resurrection, and decided to go through with it. It wasn't easy. He prayed for another option, but in the end decided to **submit to the Lord's will**. Hebrews 12:2 tells us that he was motivated by the joy he could see at the end of it all. He understood that without the shedding of blood there could be no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). He bore our sins so that we could live for righteousness (1 Peter 2:24). He was raised from the dead for our justification (Romans 4:25). He chose to die and rise again, because he could see the resurrection and the renewal of all things. His choice made the Way of Restoration.

☞ **You have a choice to make**. Will you reject the Lord? Will you cave to the pressures of the crowd? **Will you choose to follow Christ?** One of the last things Jesus said as he hung upon the cross was, "It is finished." You need to come to that same point of saying, "I'm finished." Your preconceived ideas and your normal practices aren't really all that great, so think about your situation. I've said many times before: you've been in charge for all these years and look what a mess you've made of your life. Why not give the Lord charge of your life and see just what he will do with it?



Here's the gospel truth:

☞ **Everyone has sinned** and fallen short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23). Without exception, we have all failed to live up to God's righteous standards. According to the bible, that means we all **deserve to spend eternity in torment** in the lake of fire. That's the wage we earn for sinning. (Romans 6:23). But, that's not the end of the story. God made a way for us to get out of that horrible eternity. He has given us **the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus**. We get to choose our eternity! Romans 10:9 says, "if you **confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**"

There is a Way of Restoration. You don't have to be alienated from God anymore (Colossians 1:21-22). The Way of Restoration will be challenging. You'll have to submit to the Lord's leadership and follow him no matter what. The Way of Restoration will bring about change. Some changes might be uncomfortable when friends and family don't understand what's going on in your life. But, hang in there because the greater change will come as you follow Christ and he leads you into a life of deliverance, and ultimately into eternal life, and an out-of-this-world inheritance!

☞ **Will you choose the Way of Restoration?**

It is a challenge.

It is a change.

It is your choice.

You need to make a choice, and you need to make it soon. One: you never know when your last day will be, so choose today to follow Christ. Two: Christ is returning very soon to restore his people and judge the world. You need to be ready, so choose today to follow Christ. Sharon is going to sing a song for us and while she does I want you to ponder your place in eternity. Are you ready? If Jesus returned before this day was over, do you know with certainty whether you would be included in his kingdom? Think about it.

Sharon Acuff: Only The Redeemed

Closing