

A LIVING FAITH Lesson on being STEADFAST

Theme: The cheers of Palm Sunday turn to jeers on Maundy Thursday and Holy Friday.

Object: A sports pennant and some palm branches

Scripture: **Matthew 21:6-11 (RSV or KJV)**
Matthew 27:11-22 (RSV or KJV)

Paree Looy's!



Do you have a favorite sports team? A few years ago when my favorite team won the Super Bowl, everyone was calling them "America's Team." Everywhere you looked you could see boys, and even some girls, wearing their t-shirts. After their victory in the Super Bowl, their hometown held a parade and as the team rode through the streets, the people cheered and waved. Now, just a few years later, they are not so popular. Their fans expected them to win the Super Bowl every year and that team just isn't living up to what the fans expected of them. The cheers have turned to jeers, and many of their once-faithful fans were not **steadfast** in their allegiance to their team - they have forsaken them to cheer for another team.

Did you know that the very same thing happened to Jesus? Do you know what these are? (*Hold up the palm branches.*) These are branches from a Palm tree. In the country where Jesus lived, the Palm tree was everywhere. The branches of the Palm were a symbol of victory and joy. During the time of Jesus, people used to wave Palm branches as they cheered in celebration when an important person such as a king rode through the streets of town. On the Sunday before he was crucified, Jesus rode through the streets of Jerusalem on the back of a small donkey. As he rode along, people waved Palm branches and shouted and cheered. They shouted "Glory to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" The people cheered Jesus as their King.

Just a few days later, Jesus was arrested, tried, and led to a hill called Golgotha to be crucified. The cheers that he had heard on Sunday now turned to jeers. Many of the people who just a few days before shouted "Glory to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" were not **steadfast** in their beliefs and had now turned against him. They were now shouting "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! He is not our king. We have no king but the Emperor." They were even offered the choice of whether to free a criminal named Barabbas or to free Jesus. They chose to free Barabbas and crucify Jesus. Many of His once-faithful followers had forsaken him.

You and I have to make a choice. We can choose to be **steadfast** in our beliefs, follow Jesus and make him the King and Lord of our life, or we can choose to forsake him like the people who cried, "Crucify Him! He is not our king!"

Will we be found **steadfast** in our faith?

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, today we choose to make you King and Lord of our life. Help us to be strong, and to follow you, even when all others have forsaken you. Glory to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Amen.