



Lent 6

March 25, 2018

Me & You & an Alternative View

Scripture: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; John 12:12-16

Focus statement: The crowds, as informed by Scriptural teaching, have certain expectations of the coming Messiah that come between their understanding and Jesus' lived experience, which defies their expectations. What does our reading of Scripture lead us to believe, and how might our encounters with Jesus challenge our expectations?

Summary statement for bulletin: Between Me & You and all we lay down, God's promise and God's love grow in surprising ways.

Song suggestions

HWB 43 Christ Is Our Cornerstone

HWB 238 Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

HWB 239 Ride On, Ride On in Majesty

STJ 23 Slowly Turning, Ever Turning

STJ 104 God Moves in a Mysterious Way

STS 73 Jesus Is Coming

STS 74 Hosanna! Hosanna!

God's Love Is for Everybody by Bryan Moyer Suderman

I Will Bless You by Bryan Moyer Suderman

Between Me & You theme song

Between me and you, the words of Scripture providing a clue; the stone, rejected, surprising for you,
I choose to be there with you.

Call to worship

Leader: Come, people of God, this is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day
Jesus enters Jerusalem.

People: **Open the gates of righteousness so that we can enter and give thanks to the Lord.**

Leader: The gates are open, come on in. Give thanks, for God is good!

Confession

Jesus, Messiah. The crowds around you can be thrilling, or frightening.
One moment they are clay in your hands, ready to be shaped.
The next they are squeezing you, like putty in a clenched fist, demanding that you conform.
Is that what we do?

When we count the cost of your words for us, it hurts.
We get it, why the masses turned and your disciples faded away.
Do you?

The time is ripe for change, then and now. Why can't you lead that change in a way we understand?
How is it that you define success so differently? It scares us to question you.
It's worse if we don't.

Forgive us for holding in questions so long that we can't bear the answers.
Forgive us for fearing the crowds, and the consequences.
Open our eyes and hearts to receive your teaching.
Show us again this new way of living. Help us to love like you.



Words of assurance

Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Believe in God, believe also in me.”

Between Me & You enactment (children’s feature)

Note: You may choose to incorporate this enactment into a Palm Sunday processional.

Supplies: multiple scarves

Action and noticing

- Divide the group into pairs, with a scarf stretched between each pair (illustrating between me and you).
- Tell the Palm Sunday story, and invite the pairs to lay down their scarves like the people laid their cloaks and branches on the road as Jesus passed by.

Wondering

- People in Jesus’ time had many different ideas and disagreed with each other about many things. Does that sound familiar? Do you think we have different ideas and disagreements today?
- We have been using these scarves to remind us of our theme—“Between Me & You.” We’ve been reminded about how *big* God’s love is (God’s promises for me, and you, and all the creatures too!). We’ve been reminded about how *long* God’s love is (lasting from generation to generation, to your children and children’s children and children’s children’s children too!). We’ve noticed that there can be many things come between us—conflicts and problems and disagreements of many kinds.
- Maybe today, on Palm Sunday, we’re invited to take our scarves—whatever has come between us—and lay them down in front of Jesus. The people were surprised by Jesus and what he said and what he did. Maybe Jesus will surprise us too!

Responding through song: “For Me, For You”

God’s promises are for me, for you, full of surprises too!
God’s love is for me, for you, full of surprises too!

Sermon seeds

Between

Different understanding comes between the crowds and Jesus’ lived experience (John 12:12-16)

Time comes between us and a new understanding

- The crowds who sing Psalm 118 as Jesus enters Jerusalem are proclaiming Jesus’ identity as an ancestor of David, and that Jesus is King. Jesus presents an alternative view of the role and purpose of the Messiah King proclaimed in the Scriptures, an understanding different from the people’s. How might an encounter with Jesus today challenge our understanding of Scripture?
- The disciples look back at the events of John 12 and understand them differently. Throughout history, the church has needed to look back, remember, and gain new understanding of the Scriptures, God, and ourselves. How do we feel about new understandings or reinterpretations of Scripture? What are the challenges, gifts, dangers, and blessings that come with reexamining our understanding of Scripture, God, and ourselves?

Benediction

You may choose to speak this benediction to one another by echoing: after the leader reads each line, the congregation repeats it.

We are people of God.
We go in God’s love
to extend God’s love
and live God’s promise.