

It is one of the first times I remember feeling peace-less.

I had scored the role of orphanage manager in my grade school's rendition of *Oliver Twist*. I had lines to memories. Most significantly, I had a solo to sing.

I'm sure I had experienced a lack of peace at other times in my life, but this was the first time I remember feeling a deep, visceral lack of peace – the kind of peace-less-ness that affects your sleep, your heart rate, for me, even my vocal chords (when I sang my solo I had this tremor to my voice that was no purposeful vibrato; it was my inner terror showing itself to the world).

It was the first time in my life I remember feeling a deep, visceral lack of peace, but it wasn't the last.

From that 8th grade play, to the first time I asked a girl on a date, to the first time I led chapel at the Seminary in front of professors and peers, to our 19 day stay at Children's Hospital with our middle child, the most peace-less moments of my life tend to be some of the more memorable ones.

We are collectively living in just such a moment. All but the youngest alive today are going to remember the age of COVID-19. For many of us because of this very truth that peace-less moments tend to be very memorable moments.

Peace, real peace, peace that passes human understanding peace seems to be in as short supply as toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and personal protective gear. Even if you are not as viscerally affected by the Coronavirus as some people (maybe because you are not in a high risk category, or don't interact with people in high risk categories); even if you are not personally losing sleep over it, your daily lives have been deeply affected by the peace-less atmosphere of a global pandemic.

We are living in memorable times – in the peace-less atmosphere of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Old Testament reading for Palm Sunday speaks directly to this peace-less world.

If it weren't for the pandemic, we'd be gathering together this Sunday to celebrate Palm Sunday – the start of Holy Week in the Christian church – to remember Jesus riding into Jerusalem while the masses laid palm branches and the cloaks off their backs before him.

The Old Testament reading on Palm Sunday comes from Zechariah – written 600 years before the first Palm Sunday it was a prophecy/prediction of what Jesus was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Let me read that second to last sentence one more time: **He will proclaim peace to the nations.**

To a peace-less world Palm Sunday reminds us of a Jesus who came to proclaim peace to the nations.

A pretty awesome promise through Zechariah to peace-less people then and now.

Can I share with you the secret to finding peace that passes human understanding – no matter what the outward circumstances? Remembering.

Is peace in short supply? Remember. Specifically, remember this is why Jesus matters. This is why Jesus came – to take the things that rob us of peace (like war and the threat of war that the people of Zechariah's day had to contend with; or a global pandemic that we contend with today); Jesus came to take away those things, to break those things, to prove his authoritative rule over those things all so that we can have peace. Real peace. Visceral peace. Peace that passes understanding peace. Jesus came to give us a reason to rejoice greatly to shout for joy because we see hope and salvation in a peace-robbing world.

This is the message of Palm Sunday and Holy Week to a peace-less world. Jesus came to proclaim peace to the nations.

It's the secret to peace-less-ness – remembering.

When I was a kid scared to death for my first ever solo what I needed to do was remember that my future didn't hang on my performance that night. My future was secure in Jesus whether I nailed the solo or bombed in front of all my peers and their families.

When I asked out a girl for the first time, when I gave my first chapel at Sem, when I look at the world in the age of COVID-19; I need to remember that this is why Jesus matters, this is why he came – so he could extend his rule over my life, and force everything in my life, even a nasty virus, to work out for my eternal good.

It is the secret to peace-less-ness – remembering Jesus.

But if you are like me, there are times in life when that is easier said than done. There are times in this crazy world when, as a Christian, you can intellectually understand, “Ok, Jesus came to give me peace even now,” but still feel deep, visceral peace-less-ness.

That’s why I want to remind you to remember one more thing today.

Remember **Zechariah**.

Zechariah’s name means “**the LORD has remembered.**”

And that might be my favorite thing to remember when I’m feeling peace-less.

My peace-less-ness might be proof that I have yet to fully and perfectly trust in what Jesus has done and is doing for me; I may not be very good at remembering why Jesus matters and applying it to my daily circumstances, but that is ok, because Zechariah – the LORD has remembered me.

That’s why he gave these words to Zechariah, that’s why Jesus came – because my LORD has remembered me!

He remembered his promise to save this world from all of the things that rob us of peace.

He remembers his promise to save me from my heart that fails to find perfect peace in him.

He remembered his promise to bring peace, and proclaim it, and give it to peace-less people in a peace-less world.

There is this awesome passage from Isaiah: “**Can a mother forget the** baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?”

What an unthinkable situation – that a mother who is nursing her baby would forget that baby, or fail to love and have compassion on that baby. That is an unthinkable situation, but God says, “**Though she may forget, I will not forget you!**”

It is unthinkable that a mother would forget the baby at her breast, it is even more unthinkable that God would forget you.

Friends in a peace-less world, remember Zechariah – the LORD has remembered you.

The LORD has remembered his promises and he is busy following through.

That is what Palm Sunday is all about – a God who remembered his promise to save his people and followed through.

That is what Holy Week is all about – the Last Supper, the man on the cross, the empty tomb, all a God who has remembered his promises, who has remembered you, and is busy following through.

That is what is still happening today.

You have a God who remembers his promise to save you from this world and save you from your own failing memory. So, he comes to you again today, following through on his promise – proclaiming peace to the nations; peace to you.

Friends, I will never forget my grade school play. I will never forget the age of COVID-19. How greatly I rejoice then, that no matter what happens today or tomorrow, my LORD will never forget me.

Let’s pray...