

"THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS"

INTRODUCTION

The following line taken from the 16th chapter of Matthew's Gospel introduces us to the subject of today's sermon:

"From that time on Jesus began to say to His disciples:
'I must go to Jerusalem and suffer much from the
elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the Law'"

It was the word "must" that caught my attention in this line. "I must go to Jerusalem" said Jesus. The word "must" carries with it a note of necessity, a feeling of urgency, a compelling sense of obedience - external or internal. And it's around this word "obedience" that today's sermon has been constructed.

The obedience of Jesus. Is there anything in His sense of obedience that speaks to us and sheds light on our time?

DEVELOPMENT

Suppose ~~We~~ begin by acknowledging that there are some serious signs up all around us that suggest that this word "obedience" is in danger of disappearing from our vocabulary. No longer is it a watchword in the American way of life.

I think it was back there in the thirties that we took the word "obey" out of the marriage service. And I suppose we did it for a good reason for we didn't want to suggest to anyone that we thought that a woman by nature was subordinate or inferior to a man. "Love...honor....and obey" is the way it went in the service. Now don't misinterpret me. I'm not about to suggest that there's where it all began...our troubles started....that could be dangerous.

I do think we're coming to realize, however, that more and more the word "obey" has been disappearing from our home life. Some parents may be reluctant to insist that their children obey them for fear that those children will end up neurotic and emotionally scarred. The climate has changed. It's hard for children to respond to the authority of parents if they sense their parents are not responding to a higher authority.

Not only has it been disappearing slowly from our home life, but also from the class room. There's a lack of respect for authority in the class room and on the campus. Then, too, we've taken the word "obey" out of our civil life. For some, the law is no longer sacred, something to be obeyed and respected. And in a deeper, more serious way, we have taken the word "obey" out of our moral life. The person who attempts to stand for certain moral principles, despite the cost to himself, is apt to be called by emancipated friends "victorian", "prudish"...."just not with it".

AND YET

And yet - and this is a strange and a paradoxical thing - in spite of all that we have done to eliminate obedience from life, when we see a young man turning toward the city of Jerusalem....moving deliberately to a death that was almost certain, because it was an unavoidable part of a mission He believed to be the will of God...we stand up and cheer Him just as the people did on Palm Sunday in Jerusalem long ago. It appeals to something in us.

I think there is something buried deep in all of us - despite our desire to get rid of all of the restraints and restrictions of life - that responds to this sense of obedience in a human life. We admire it. We might not be willing to do

it ourselves. We might laugh at him tomorrow and say "what a fool", but when we see Him do it, we find ourselves standing up and cheering. We respond to it. "I must go to Jerusalem" said Jesus to his disciples "and suffer many things."

JESUS AND THE WORD "MUST" Moving on, I think we can pin down as one of the points of this sermon that Jesus learned very early in His life the meaning of this ~~four-letter~~ word "must", and He probably learned it from His parents. This is where most people learn it if they are fortunate.

He learned in that home in Nazareth that there were certain chores that the oldest son "must" do, and He did them. He learned from Mary and Joseph that there were certain rules and regulations that the family observed - rules and regulations that must be kept in life - if life was to add up to anything significant. I would like to think that He learned from both parents that there were some spiritual disciplines that had to be followed in order to keep the life of the spirit strong and dynamic.

He learned early in life that there were things He must do - not only at home, but also in the world.

Parenthetically, one might add this observation - that it doesn't make a great deal of difference where a man learns the meaning of the word "must" so long as He learns it. For instance, one may learn it in the classroom or in the laboratory where, as he bends over the materials of the physical universe, he discovers that there are things that are mastered only after they are obeyed - electricity, atomic energy.

Another person may learn it in the class room of life, the hard way, too late - after a breakdown in health, or a breakdown in a relationship.

He may go along through the early years of his life under the illusion that he can have a marriage or anything else pretty much on his own terms. He may disregard the advice of others when they tell him about the conditions to be fulfilled and the requirements to be met, and then, suddenly....after several years of ignoring those conditions and living in a human relationship which leaves out trust, respect, give and take, understanding - all the ingredients which make a marriage possible, the marriage crashes to the ground.

Tragically and sadly, he or she learns that there are some things in life that a person "must" do.

JESUS KNEW THIS Back to Jesus. By the time He was a grown man, He had a fairly clear picture of what personally He must do with His life.

And although we have no way of knowing, this probably came upon Him gradually. At the time of His baptism, He sensed it with a power and conviction that up to that time He had not had. His thing was to do the will of God, and this will of God was a very real and personal thing for Him. For Him, the will of God meant seeking and saving those who were lost. (This is the theme of the entire Gospel). It meant going out to people - all sorts and conditions of people and bringing the love of God to them, bringing them back into a wholeness of life.

He knew that He "must" do the will of God. We begin to catch a glimpse of

the inner commitment of His life to a higher calling, a higher power. External compulsion and restraint are good and necessary, but inner compulsion and inner restraint represent a higher and better form of obedience and we see this exemplified the life of our Lord.

In a sense, Jesus was not driven to Jerusalem, but rather He was drawn there - drawn by the object of his devotion and loyalty. He did it because He wanted to do it. He did it because He had seen something in the saving love of God that was so tremendous when it was let loose in the lives of people and the affairs of the world that you could not stay apart from it - no matter what it meant and how much suffer might be involved.

He went to Jerusalem, drawn there by the magnetism of God's love. This is obedience reaching up to its highest peak, to its full maturity, its finest flowering.

ALSO I think a person's conception of what he MUST do changes across the years of his life. I should like to believe it grows and deepens.

Jesus began by obeying his parents. He ended by obeying the call of God in His own heart. He began by doing the things He was taught and told to do. He ended by doing the things He could not help doing. And so He grew in obedience. He grew into new sets of loyalties.

CONCLUSION As we now begin to move toward the events of Palm Sunday, and as we watch that joyous procession begin to make its way to Jerusalem, we see it all again - one of the basic and fundamental lessons of life:

"one never masters life as its lord, until one learns first to obey it as its servant".

It can be put in different ways, expressed in different words. From his father, Joseph, in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth back in the hills of Galilee, Jesus learned that there was a grain in the wood that MUST be considered and not ignored. And so, too, there is something of a grain that runs through life, that's there in the fabric of the universe, a grain that one must not ignore if life is to be built into something lasting, something good, something significant.

PRAYER O God, as we try to follow Jesus in these last days of His earthly life, give us the imagination to see Him as He really was and give to each of us the will to capture in our own lives something of that spirit of mature obedience to something greater than self by which the door of life is opened to us, to all who sincerely seek it.

We ask this in the name and spirit of Jesus, our Lord. Amen

"From that time on Jesus began to say to His disciples:
I MUST go to Jerusalem, and suffer much from the elders,
the chief priests and the teachers of the Law"

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The following line, taken from the 16th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, introduces us to the subject of today's sermon:

"From that time on Jesus began to say to his disciples:
'I MUST go to Jerusalem and suffer much from the elders,
the chief priests and the teachers of the Law'"

It was the word "must" that caught my attention in this line. "I must go to Jerusalem" said Jesus to his disciples. The word "must" carries with it a note of necessity; it carries with it a sense of obedience - internal or external. And it is around this word "obedience" that I wish to build my thoughts and words to you this morning. The obedience of Jesus...is there anything in his sense of obedience that speaks to us and our situation today.

DEVELOPMENT

Suppose we begin by acknowledging that there are some serious signs up all around us that indicate that this word "obedience" is in danger of disappearing from the vocabulary of the American people. No longer is it a watchword in American life.

I think it was back in the 1930's that we took the word "obey" out of the marriage service. And I suppose we did it for a good reason for we did not want to suggest to anyone that we thought that a woman by nature was subordinate or inferior to a man. "Love - honor - obey" was the way it ran then, and I'm not suggesting that this was the beginning of our trouble. I do think we are coming to realize more and more that the word "obey" has been slowly disappearing from our home life. Some parents hardly dare to insist that their children obey them for fear that those children will become neurotic, and emotionally scarred. And not only has it been disappearing from our home life, but also from the class room. From time to time we read about the violence and lack of respect for authority in the class room and on the campus.

Then, too, we have taken the word "obey" in an alarming way out of our civil life. In recent years we have heard more about civil disobedience than we have civil obedience. The law for some people is no longer something to be obeyed and respected. And in a much more serious way, we have taken the word "obey" out of our moral life, and the person who attempts to stand for certain moral principles, despite the cost to himself or herself, is apt to be called by his or her more emancipated brethren "victorian", "prudish", "foolish", and "not with it".

AND YET...

And yet, and this is the strange, paradoxical thing, in spite of all that we have done to eliminate obedience from life, when we see a young man turning toward the city of Jerusalem...moving deliberately to a death that was almost certain, because it was an unavoidable part of a mission he believed to be the will of God - we stand up and cheer him just as the crowds did on the streets of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday long ago. In other words, I think there is something deep in all of us, despite our desire to get rid of all the restraints and restrictions of life, that responds positively when we see a man acting under a strong sense of obedience. We might not be willing to do it ourselves. We might laugh at him tomorrow and say what a fool he was, but when we see him do it, we stand up and cheer in great admiration....

There is buried deep in all of us something that responds to this sense of obedience - at its highest and its best - and one of the qualities in the life of Jesus that touches us and influences us is this very quality of obedience. "I must go to Jerusalem" said Jesus, "and suffer many things...."

THREE THINGS TO SAY

The obedience of Jesus. We catch a glimpse of that inner commitment of his life to a higher law, ~~to what he called the will of God.~~ Has the obedience of Jesus anything to suggest to us, and to our situations. For me, it does. It has several things to suggest. Let me present them to you in three separate steps. I think each one has some light to shed on the road we travel.

I

The first is this. No one is always absolutely sure of what he must do. No matter what the situation may be - a vocational or ethical decision - there is apt to be some measure of uncertainty and doubt involved. Rare is the life that does not have it. For example, take a man who has a big and important job to do. The time comes when the demands of that job make it impossible, at least for the time being, for him to fulfill all of the normal, natural demands of his family. He doesn't exactly know what he ought to do - whether he should stand by the job and let the family take the second position, or whether he should put the family first and the job second. He is in a dilemma. Or take another example. Here's another man who has certain principles about the supreme value of human life, and there comes a time of war when patriotism and his love of nation which is very deep is in conflict with his other principles regarding the sanctity of life. His loyalties conflict. When this happens, to what or to whom does he give his allegiance, his obedience....

It appears that at least on two occasions, Jesus experienced inner doubt and uncertainty and conflict to what he should do. Once, it was in the wilderness following his baptism when he found it necessary to determine what kind of a leader he was going to be, and what kind of a role he was to follow in setting his people free, and this he had to resolve alone in the presence of God. And then again, the night before the crucifixion, in Gethsemane, the doubts and uncertainties and inner conflicts returned again, and this time it was even more intense. He knew that he must save his people, but must he die in order to do it. There was a side of him which kept questioning whether that was really necessary, and in order to find his answer he had to think through the whole thing in the moonlight of Gethsemane.

I would say this: we, like him, cannot always expect to have a clear answer to our questions. When we come to those situations in life when the way is uncertain, when we are not sure what to do or whom to obey, how helpful and how essential it is for us to go apart, to the quiet place, to think things through quietly in the presence of God - to let him lead us, guide us to the right conclusion. Seek the help, too, of another person. Sometimes he speaks through another whose judgment is sound and whose opinion you can trust. People, backgrounds, situations vary in life, and I have discovered over the years in counselling with people and helping them around a difficult corner of life that what appears to be the best way for one may not necessarily be the best way for another.

II

There is a second thing that the obedience of Jesus suggests to us. Whatever it is that you must do, you must do it willingly. I think we appreciate this fact and we probably have the psychiatrists to thank for it. In other words, a purely external compulsion is not always the most healthy thing. A child, for instance, who obeys his parents all of the time because he doesn't dare not to, is not the healthiest child emotionally, and something ought to be done to help him get to the point where he obeys his parents, not out of fear, but rather because he wants to. Or the man, for instance, who obeys the law because there is a policeman standing on the corner watching him. He is acting under external com-

pulsions and the real person who is inside is not in allegiance with the thing he is doing. External compulsion, external restraint is good and necessary, but inner compulsion and inner restraint is a higher and better form of obedience.

Again, drawing upon the example of Jesus. No one was driving Jesus to Jerusalem; there was no one behind him, visibly or invisibly, with a club saying, "Now you must do this....this is the thing everybody is expecting you to do,,,, if you don't do this, you will disgrace yourself and all of us..." There was nothing like that at all. Jesus was not driven to Jerusalem, but rather he was drawn there, drawn by the object of his devotion and loyalty. He did it because he wanted to do it. He did it because he had seen something in the saving love of God that was so tremendous when it was let loose in the life of people and the affairs of the world that you could not stay apart from it, no matter what it meant - life or death. There was no external compulsion. He went to Jerusalem, drawn there by the magnetism of God's love and being. This is obedience reaching up to its highest peak, to its full maturity, its finest flowering.

And the third thing. I think that a man's conception of what he must do changes across the years of his life - it grows and deepens. As a child, he must do what his parents want him to do. This is normal and natural. When he grows up he cannot always do what his parents want him to do. He grows into a new set of loyalties. For instance, if he has a wife, she should now come first. If he gives himself to some great commitment in life, this may come first. And it is amazing to me to see how many people there are - both parents and children - who never learn this. As a man or a woman grows, he or she grows into new obediences, and those who hold the reins of the old ones - the parents - must learn to know when to release them, must learn to know when the child is no longer a child, when the obedience is due to something greater than an earthly father or mother.

Jesus grew in his obedience across the years of his life. We see this in an impressive way when we take certain lines from the Gospels and put them together. They form a moving picture of the way a man's response to his loyalties grew, deepened, intensified. "I must be about my father's business" - this is the enthusiastic obedience of a 12 year old boy visiting the Temple. "I must preach the kingdom of God" - this is the more sober obedience of a young man beginning his mission. "I must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things...." this is the solemn obedience of an adult under the threat of grave danger who would rather face death than renounce his faith. He began by obeying his parents. He ended by obeying the call of God in his heart. He began by doing the thing he was told to do. He ended by doing the things he could not help doing. And so he grew in obedience.

CONCLUSION And as we approach the events of Palm Sunday, we see it all once again. We see once again - as we watch that solemn procession begin to make its way to Jerusalem - one of the basic and fundamental lessons of life: one never masters life as its lord, until one learns first to obey it as its servant. From his father, Joseph, in the carpenter's shop of Nazareth, he learned that there was a grain in the wood that must be considered and not ignored. So too, there is something of a grain that runs through life that one must consider if life is to amount to anything significant.

PRAYER O God, as we try to follow Jesus of Nazareth in these last days of his earthly life, give us the imagination to see him as he really was and give us also the will to capture in ourselves something of his spirit - the

the spirit of mature obedience by which the door of life is opened to us - to all who sincerely seek it. We ask this in the name of Christ, our Lord. Amen

"THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS"

INTRODUCTION

In the 16th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, we read the following line:

"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes....."

My attention was caught by the word "must" in that line. This word "must" carries with it a sense of obedience - internal or external.

I sometimes have the feeling that the word "obedience" is disappearing from the vocabulary of the American people. No longer is it a watchword in American life. Back in the 1930's we took the word "obey" out of the marriage service. I suppose we did it for a good reason. We did not want to suggest to anyone that we thought that a woman by nature was subordinate or inferior to a man. We are coming to realize that the word "obey" has been taken out of home life altogether. Parents hardly dare to insist that their children obey them for fear that they will become neurotic. It appears that the word "obedience" is disappearing out of school life. We read in our papers about the violence in the class room, and it looks to us that students no longer are obeying their teachers.

We have taken the word "obey" in an alarming way out of our civil life. In fact, we hear more about civil disobedience than we do civil obedience. We know that the law for many people is no longer something to be obeyed, but something to be gotten around. And in a much more serious way, we have taken the word "obey" out of our moral life, and the person who attempts to stand for certain moral principles, despite the cost to himself or herself, is called by his more emancipated brethren "victorian" - "prudish".

And yet, and this is the strange, paradoxical thing, in spite of all that we have done to eliminate obedience from life, when we see a young man turning toward the city of Jerusalem, moving deliberately to a death that was almost certain, because it was an unavoidable part of a mission he believed to be the will of God, we stand up and cheer him just as the crowds did on the streets of Jerusalem long ago. In other words, there is something deep in us, despite our desire to get rid of all restraints and restrictions in life, that responds positively when we see a man acting under a strong sense of obedience. We might not be willing to do it ourselves. We might laugh at him tomorrow and say what a fool he was, but when we see him do it we stand up and cheer in admiration.

There is something deep in us that responds to this notion of obedience at its best, and one of the qualities of Jesus that touches us is this very quality of obedience.

"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things..."

JESUS AND THE WORD "MUST"

Jesus learned very early in life the meaning of the word "must". And he

probably learned it from his parents. That is where most people learn it if they are fortunate to have good parents. He learned from his mother, Mary, that there were certain chores that the oldest son MUST do, and he did them. He learned from his father, Joseph, who was a carpenter by trade that there was a grain in the wood which he MUST consider. He learned from both of them that there were synagogue services every Saturday, and in spite of rain and bad weather, or in spite of how he might feel at the time, he MUST go to them. He learned from both of them that there were rules and regulations that MUST be kept in life, if life was to amount to anything. He knew there were things he MUST do, not only at home but also in the world.

It doesn't make much difference where a man learns the meaning of the word "must" as long as he learns it. One may learn it later in a laboratory where, as he bends over the materials of the physical universe, he suddenly discovers that there are things that are mastered only after they are obeyed, like electricity or atomic energy. Another man learns it, alas, too late, when his marriage goes to pieces. He may go along through the early years of his life under the illusion that he can have a marriage or anything else pretty much on his own terms. He may disregard the advice of his elders when they tell him about the conditions to be fulfilled and requirements to be met, and then, suddenly, after several years of ignoring those conditions and living in a marriage relationship which leaves out cooperation, compromise, give and take, and all the things which make a marriage possible, his marriage crashes to the ground. He then tragically learns that there are some things in life that a man must do.

JESUS KNEW WHAT HE MUST DO

By the time Jesus was a grown man, he knew pretty well what he personally must do. It probably, although we have no way of knowing, came upon him gradually - perhaps at the time of his baptism, bursting upon him with a power he had never known before. He knew that the thing he must do was the will of God. And this will of God was very real to him. The will of God for him was to seek and to save those who were lost. This is the theme of the Gospel. The people who have not quite made the grade in life...the people who were on the wrong track...the people whose standards and values were all upside down. The one thing Jesus believed to be the will of God for him was to seek out and to save and to bring back into the wholeness of life those who were lost.

And he knew, certainly, after the first few months that to seek and to save means to suffer, because, and this is one of the strange things about human beings - often the people who are the most desperately lost don't want to be found, and the people who are not lost resent somebody else taking the time and the trouble to go after those who are lost in order to bring them back into the fold. So Jesus knew from the early days that if he was going to do this thing it would mean suffering, but he knew that this above everything else was what he must do.

I think those who know all their life what they must do are certainly the fortunate ones. Edwin Booth, our great American actor,

Take the case of....

when he was 18, was traveling with his famous actor - father. They were playing in New York, and his father was scheduled to play one of his famous roles - the lead in Shakespeare's "Richard III". The father took ill in the afternoon and told his rather shy son, who had never been on the stage before in anything but very minor roles, that he could not go to the theatre that night. When Edwin asked him what would happen, the father said, "You will play it". Edwin went, and as he trembled in the wings the people backstage looked at him in amazement and wondered what would happen, but when once he launched into the part, he won his way into the heart of the audience, and when he finished there was applause that was deafening. Then the biographer says, "It was this night's applause that Edwin heard for the rest of his life. Until this night he might have been happier as a cabinet maker or as a lawyer. How it was too late. Retreat where he might, the compulsion of this applause roaring in his memory's ear would draw him back again. A capricious destiny had unfitted him for any life but one".

He was one of the fortunate ones - one of those who knew from the very early days that there was one thing and one thing only that he must do. And there are people like that - probably among us here now - some men who know from the beginning that they must be a doctor, or a lawyer, or a minister; some woman who knows in the early days that she must be a teacher, or a social worker, or a nurse, or a mother. But such are in the minority. What about the rest of us who perhaps have no one supreme thing that we think we must do in life. Has the obedience of Jesus anything to say to us.

THREE THINGS TO SAY It has at least three things to say, and I think they are important. The first is this. No one is always sure of what he must do. There are moments of doubt and uncertainty in every one's life. For example, take a man who has a big and important job to do. The time comes when the demands of that job make it impossible, at least for the time, for him to fulfill all the normal, natural demands of his family. He doesn't know exactly what he ought to do - whether he should stand by the job and let the family go, or whether he should stand by his family and let the job go. He is in a dilemma. Or, there is another man, who has certain principles about the various things of life and there comes a time of war when patriotism and his love of nation, which is deep, is in conflict with his principles. What must he do, must he stand by the principles and seem to let his nation go by the board, or must he stand by the nation and let the principles go? What must he obey?

Now, on at least two occasions Jesus was not absolutely sure. He was in some such position as we have described. In the scene which we call the Temptation, after the baptism, when his mission seemed to be so clear to him, he had to face a serious question. He knew he must take the lead, but what kind of leader must he be. He wasn't sure. Must he be a military leader - a popular leader - a political leader - what kind of leader. He had to think that through all by himself in the presence of God. And then, there was another time in his life, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he had the same kind of thing to do but in a more intense way. He knew that he must

save his people, but must die in order to do it. He wasn't absolutely sure. There was another side of him which kept questioning whether that was really necessary, and he had to think that whole thing through there in the moonlight of Gethsemane.

We - like him - cannot always expect to know exactly what we must do. We - like him - must go apart once in a while....when we come to those situations in life when the way is uncertain, when we are not sure what or whom to obey - to think quietly about those questions in the presence of God and let him guide us to the right conclusion.

There is a second thing that the obedience of Jesus has to say. Whatever it is that you must do, you must do it willingly. I think all of us appreciate this fact, and we probably have the psychiatrists to thank for this. In other words, a purely external compulsion is not always the most healthy thing. A child, for instance, who obeys his parents all of the time because he doesn't dare not to, is not the healthiest child emotionally, and something ought to be done to help him get to the point where he obeys his parents because he wants to. Or the man, for example, who obeys the law because there is a policeman in sight....standing at a corner....is not a mature man. He is acting under external compulsions and the real person who is inside is not in allegiance with the thing he is doing at all.

No one was driving Jesus to Jerusalem. There was no one behind him - visibly or invisibly - with a club saying - now you must do this, this is the thing everybody expects you to do, this is the thing that if you don't do it will disgrace you. Nothing like that at all. Jesus was not driven to Jerusalem, but rather he was drawn there - drawn by the object of his devotion and loyalty. He did it because he wanted to do it. He did it because he had seen something in the saving love of God that was so tremendous when it was let loose in the life of man and the affairs of the world that you could not stay apart from it - no matter what it meant - life or death. There was no external compulsion. He went to Jerusalem, drawn there by the magnetism of God's love and being. This is obedience reaching its full maturity. This is the second thing.

And the third thing is this. A man's conception of what he must do changes and grows across the years of a life. As a child, he must do what his parents want him to do. Normal and natural. But when he grows up he cannot always do what his parents want him to do. If he has a wife, she comes first. If he has some great commitment in life, this may come first. And it is amazing to me to see how many people there are - both parents and children - who never learn that. As a man or a woman grows, he grows into new obediences, and those who hold the reins of the old ones, the parents, must learn to know when to release them...must learn to know when the child is no longer a child.. when the obedience is due to something far greater than an earthly mother or father.

Jesus grew in his obedience across the years of his life. We see this in an impressive way when we take certain lines from the Gospels and put them together....they form a moving picture of the way a man's response to his loyalties grew, deepened and intensified.

"I must be about my father's business" - that is the enthusiastic obedience of a twelve year old boy visiting the Temple. "I must preach the kingdom of God" - that is the more sober obedience of a young man beginning his mission. "I Must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many thing, and be killed" - that is the solemn obedience of an adult under the threat of grave danger who would rather face death than renounce his faith. He began by obeying his parents. He ended by obeying God. He began by doing the things he was told to do. He ended by doing the thing he could not help doing. And so he grew in obedience.

And as we approach the events of Palm Sunday - we see it all again. We see once again as we watch that solemn procession begin to make its way to Jerusalem one of the fundamental lessons of life: one never masters life as its lord until one learns first to obey it as its servant.

LET US PRAY O God, as we try to follow Jesus of Nazareth in these last days of his earthly life, give us the imagination to see him as he really was and give us also the will to capture in ourselves something of his spirit - the spirit of mature obedience by which the door of life is opened to us - to all who sincerely seek it. We ask this in the name of Him who was obedient unto death - even the death on the cross. Amen