

Read

Hebrews 8:1–13

Consider

April 10 is the beginning of Holy Week this year. It's Palm Sunday. It is the week that Christians mark every year to remember the last week of Jesus's earthly life. As part of your devotional life this week, you might want to pick one of the Gospels and think through what is reported as having happened during this week.

One of the things that will do for you is underline the importance of this week in the minds of the Gospel writers. Take Mark for instance. The traditional wisdom is that Jesus's earthly ministry lasted about three years—three Passover observances are mentioned in the Gospel of John. But look at Mark; two years and 51 weeks are compressed into ten chapters, the last week of Jesus's ministry is dealt with in chapters eleven through sixteen. Obviously the focus on the "good news" is that last week.

What happens? There is the Palm Sunday parade, cleansing of The Temple, a variety of teaching including the commandment to love God and neighbour, the destruction of The Temple predicted, Jesus being anointed at Bethany and then the events of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and, of course, Easter. There's a whole lot packed into eight days! Take some time to read about that week long ago as you go through it today.

One of the things that happens that week which has taken on vital importance for the church ever since is Jesus giving to his followers the meal that is now symbolized in our observance of The Lord's Supper or Communion. This being the second Sunday of the month, the English Ministry congregation is going to observe Communion this Sunday. Jesus referred to the cup of the new covenant in his blood; as I will comment in the sermon, he could not have had anything else in mind but that prophesy of Jeremiah, quoted in our text from Hebrews.

There are many ideas upon which one could focus in the words of God through Jeremiah. Surely one idea that is at the heart of this week is expressed in Hebrews 8:12. God says that with the new covenant, *I will remember their sins no more*. What we **remember** when we celebrate communion is that through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross God no longer **remembers** our sin. We bring to mind the grace of God that through Jesus our sins are no longer a barrier to fellowship with God.

"Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:9). Get ready to shout your praises at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow in the sanctuary or watching from home. I pray it will be a great start to a spiritually uplifting week.

The Rev. Dr. Bill Norman

P r a y

Heavenly Father, thank you for your grace, mercy, and forgiveness given to us in the new covenant. Help to build our trust in you day by day, that we may live to please you and be faithful to the covenant. We ask all this in the name of our great high priest and bridge-builder Jesus. Amen.

D i v i n g D e e p e r

What among your “gadgets” is your favourite? Will it still be used in 2035? What about 2050? Is there some item you depend on now that you think will soon be obsolete? Is there a “gadget” you wish were obsolete now?

How are the locations, natures and the functions of the earthly priesthood and Jesus’s priesthood contrasted? In what ways is the priesthood of Jesus superior?

Bill mentions in the sermon that covenants between people and nations are usually two-sided but the covenant offered by God is one-sided. Why is that important? Why was a new covenant needed?

All of the promises of the new covenant are examples of God’s grace. What are those promises? In your circumstances right now (after two years of COVID restrictions, for example) is there one of those promises that is particularly meaningful?

How can we live closer **WITH GOD** in our lives?

How are we being **TRANSFORMED** to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we **DO** this week?