

Changes

Palm Sunday Sermon – April 2, 2023

Jesus wants to create a new and clean temple in our hearts: a new and clean life, where, in the middle, there is the throne of Almighty and Holy God. He wants to create in us a pure, clean, and joyful heart, because real joy can be experienced only in a clean and sacred heart.

One of our biggest problems is to recognize those things in our lives that are making Jesus sad, which are not loved by Jesus.

Around that day which we call Palm Sunday, Jesus wanted to spend time in the temple of Jerusalem, praying, meditating and worshipping. But instead of peace and quietness, the sacred air was filled with those animals' voices which were brought in to be sold. The voice of God was not dominating but the voices of bargainers. Most of the people tolerated the situation. Others really enjoyed the busy marketplace because of the profit they made. Even the priests were agreeing with this situation because they took their taxes from sellers.

If you would ask people how they like this scenario, most of them would say: "that's fine, we have to accommodate everybody's needs". Jesus Christ was the only one, who said: "NO, this is not OK. This is way above tolerance. This is blasphemy. God will turn away from that temple, and from the burning offerings, and will not listen to the prayers, because God's house was not God's house any more but was turned into a marketplace where people did their own business for their own sake. What they did by selling and buying had nothing to do with God."

Dear beloved, today in our society, we are facing similar problems. Our tolerance is way above a normal level. These days, even in our government and court system, we see certain issues which make me sick in my stomach. And when we see how some of our leaders behave, we say: okay. There are countries that are supporting this war in Europe, just because they make huge profits by letting Ukrainian and Russian people kill each other. And we remain silent.

We are small people who stand up against wrong politicians. Long ago, when I realized I am not enough to go against wrongdoings, somebody taught me a very significant sentence: It is not our job to do justice; it's our job to be more truthful.

Today, our responsibility is to discover what we should throw out from our own lives, what we should change in our behaviour, where are the dark sides in our personality, and how can we get a clean heart, a holy place for God.

Even though we try seriously to change our lives, we don't have enough wisdom and power to change. This is why God has to intervene today, on Palm Sunday, as He intervened when He cleansed the temple of God. He is the one who can change us completely. Jesus is offering this great opportunity today: not with His whip, but by His Holy Spirit and love.

The Bible says that we have a great opportunity to be cleansed and to change. And only after we are cleansed and changed, we should try to help people who honestly and seriously want to Change.

If you accept Jesus Christ to cleanse your life and to renew your faith, a new life will start to grow in you. This new life is coming from above, from heaven. I cannot produce it in my own body or mind.

How can Jesus Christ cleanse our hearts, our lives today?

We have to listen to His word as we listen to the sermon, then we have to read the Bible and, as a result, as we open our hearts, we allow God to talk to us. We believe in His words. If we accept Him, a new life will be conceived in us. This miraculous change comes from God, and it is not something that we create in us.

So the Bible does not say that God will help us to be better, but says that God will create a new heart, a new life in us. The new life will come, not through development, education, and teaching, but through the word of Creator God. God will not fix the old one but will create a new one, and we will have the nature of Jesus.

Today, we all have a great opportunity to change, to walk away with a new pure heart. Then we will have the courage and strength to help those people who honestly and seriously want to change.

But this is not like somebody thinking that we decide to change and we invite God to help us. He is not a businessman to whom we can give more prayer and He will give us a few better qualities of behaviour. God is not measuring our good and bad actions. God will CREATE in us a new personality.

At the beginning of time, He said "LET IT BE!!!" and with His power, God created things with His words. Today, for those who embrace and include God's words in their lives, His words will create a new life in us.

David's prayer was: CREATE in me a NEW, CLEAN HEART. He is not asking God to fix his heart but to CREATE in him a new heart.

The person who said that we cannot be Jesus Christ, was right. There is only ONE Jesus Christ. But He can cleanse us, He can live in us through our faith and we will become very similar to Him. We cannot totally change ourselves. This is why we need Jesus Christ.

In order to be changed, we need a lot of humbleness. We have to reach the point when we realize that we have to be changed; we tried many times and we relapsed, but we won't give up on being a new person.

The first question is: do you want to change, or are you happy with yourself as you are? (A few months ago, I had a conversation with somebody about this topic who said to me: "Frank, I am already 80 years old, and you want to tell me that I still have to change?")

The second question is: Do you want to be born again in order to enter into heaven? YES or NO???

For those who delay in saying YES now, their quiet answer is NO.

In John 3:36, Jesus says a very important thing: "*He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but wrath of God abides on him.*"

Let us rejoice knowing that God's grace is offering us a new life in Christ Jesus, cleansing and renewing us. I am sure that, very soon, we will wonder how many things we have changed. Let it be. Amen