

2008, 3-16 No wishy washiness, John 12v12-19, Matt 27(Palm Sunday)

If you hadn't noticed the people seemed to be indecisive about Jesus. First they hail him as king, and next they want to crucify him. Then like people with fickle wishy washy minds, they mock him as son of God one minute and the next they honestly believe he is the son of God.

Jesus is picking the flower pedals one by one, they love me, they love me not, they love me, they love me not. Jesus realized this even with his supposedly faithful followers. Peter, who said he would follow Jesus to the grave, denies him three times. One day he follows Jesus with his whole heart, the next he gives up on Jesus.

It is like a fair weather fan. This year's super bowl was interesting. Teams in New York and New England aren't very close to us. Who would we root for? We could root for New England because they had an undefeated season. Or we could root for the underdog, New York. Either way we probably acted like we had been fans of either team all year. But who really knows that many of the players and who really would have rooted for them to win early in the season?

I know that there are some die hard fans here today. I commend everyone for sticking with their team, even when they are losing. I must say I never really rooted for the Green Bay Packers. But I have known a few Packer fans. They will go out in sub zero temperatures, with cheese on their heads, and they keep cheering for their team no matter what. I thought it was a little over dramatic when Brett Farve was crying about the end of his football career with Green Bay. But I'm sure there were plenty of Green Bay fans crying along with him.

What is really sad though, is when people give up on something they really believe in. The media bombards us with the struggle in the democratic party. You and I know that there are some fair weather voters out there. When one candidate looks like they have more money, or they are more popular, then the votes swing toward that candidate. Besides that, the candidates themselves seem wishy washy. Their voting records show they have been on both sides of the issue. They are for the war and then against it. They are for abortion and then against it. You just can't trust Republicans and Democrats alike, and now the party names mean so much less than they did when you could count on a party to support certain issues. It has all become a political game to see who is the most popular, and who is going to win with the most votes.

It's easy to point fingers, but we must confess our own wishy washiness as well. We are just like the people in the Bible at times. When things are going well for us, then Jesus is easy to follow. But when things get rough, suddenly we aren't so dedicated to being a Christian. (Proverbs verse, or James 1:6) And if we don't feel good, or don't get what we like, then we give up, or maybe even try out something else, just to see if we can be happy.

The people were happy to see Jesus at first. They had heard of his amazing miracles. He rose Lazarus from the dead, what would he do next? What did they expect? Maybe they expected an entertainer, maybe someone to give them health and prosperity, and maybe a political leader, making his grand entrance with all kinds of pomp and circumstance. Jesus deserved the praise to be sure, he was the king.

Sadly, later he was mocked, "Ha, king of the Jews!" It is hard to say those words, is it not? That is because it reveals our true selves. We praise God in church, but not

always in our words or deeds outside of Church. To a certain extent we do crucify Jesus when others see our sins revealed out in the open.

Yet Jesus with great determination set his face like flint. Flint is a hard stone or metal that you can strike something against and it will not break. Jesus resolutely would die for us no matter what. He would not give up on us, even after being struck on the face, whipped on his back, and had nails driven through his hands and feet.

Jesus may be picking petals, but he knows that he loves you. And his blood now covers you and your children. He never gives up on you. He never chooses the other team. He never gave up, even in the times when you gave up on him.

If the wind blows another direction or even if the sand shifts, Jesus is the same today, yesterday, and forever. You could not find a more faithful friend, not one who would die for you in this way.

So how do we stop ourselves from changing our allegiance from Jesus when the wind blows a different way. How do we stop ourselves from choosing Barrabas over Jesus. How do we, without wavering, steadfastly follow Jesus?

Just look at him and see who he really is. He is not a political leader, he never was. He is not an entertainer, he never was. He is not a millionaire, he never was.

He is everything you would honestly ever want him to be. He is a faithful friend. He is a determined teammate. He is our King.

Despite his suffering on the cross, his humiliating death, and his unpopularity, He is in fact the Son of God.

Charles Colson in his book *Kingdoms In Conflict*, tells how

before the collapse of communism, the government of Poland issued an order that all

crucifixes were to be removed from classroom walls just as they had been banned in factories, hospitals, and other public institutions. Many church leaders stirred waves of anger and resentment all across Poland. Ultimately the government relented, insisting that the law remain on the books, but agreeing not to press for removal of the crucifixes, particularly in the schoolrooms.

But one zealous Communist school administrator decided that the law was the law. So one evening he had seven large crucifixes removed from lecture halls where they had hung since the school's founding in the twenties. Days later, a group of parents entered the school and hung more crosses. The administrator promptly had these taken down as well.

The next day two-thirds of the school's six hundred students staged a sit-in. When heavily armed riot police arrived, the students were forced into the streets. Then they marched, crucifixes held high, to a nearby church where they were joined by twenty-five hundred other students from nearby schools for a morning of prayer in support of the protest.

Soldiers surrounded the church. But the pictures from inside of students holding crosses high above their heads flashed around the world. So did the words of the priest who delivered the message to the weeping congregation that morning. "There is no Poland without a cross." SUCH is the impact of the cross...

Take a look at yourself and see who you really want to choose. Deny yourself and take up your cross to follow Jesus. Be a loser for Jesus. Take on the soldiers, the Pharisees, and show them your cross. Amen