



## Matthew 16:13-20 New International Version

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

<sup>14</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

<sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” he asked.

“Who do you say I am?”

<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup> Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

<sup>21</sup> From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

“Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.” Oscar Wilde



# Sermon Notes

## THE QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

**The UNAVOIDABLE Question:** What does it mean to you?

Common responses...

**PUBLIC Opinion:** most popular, least offensive

**PARTY Opinion:** least popular, most offensive

**PERSONAL Opinion:** what you're committed to

**YOU get a choice – It's your life**

*“Christians are made, not born.”* Tertullian

**Your Choice Matters – It's your future**

You matter as much as the things that matter to you

**Beginning of True DISCIPLESHIP**

*“The choice we face is not, as many imagine, between heaven and hell. Rather, the choice is between heaven and this world. Even a fool would exchange hell for heaven; but only the wise will exchange this world for heaven.”* Dave Hunt

# LIVING WORD

## People Helping People

One Palm Sunday early in my ministry, the children were all gathered at the front of the church for children's time. There was only one, small problem. The children had all been given their palms branches before coming forward. So no matter what I talked about, they had something much more interesting in their hands: a sword or a whip.

First one little boy thrust his palm frond into the head of a neighbor, then he decided to try out his weapon on the girl next to him. She shrieked, at first in shock and then in delight. Why didn't they get these neat swords every Sunday?

Soon, every kid seemed to be either dodging, flicking or stabbing a palm into another kid's back, as I was trying to recount the gentleness of Jesus and shouts of "Hosanna". It was an act of futility.

It was a reflection of the real Palm Sunday story. A leader enters in triumph but the people are fickle. They turn on him, and then upon one another. One minute Jesus is the object of their cries of admiration, the next they are crying "Crucify him." Their power overcame their praise.

Children poking each other with palms in church are cute and kinda of funny. Especially when you're not the pastor dealing with it.

But grown-ups who turn on each other without a second thought are scary. Beware of the crowds that get whipped up in praise and adoration, for they could just as quickly turn in hatred and cruelty. That's what happened on Palm Sunday to Jesus, and it could happen anywhere on earth today. It could happen to you!

There's a tradition we have of folding the palm fronds in just the right way so that they become crosses. Let's turn our palms into crosses so we won't be tempted to use them as swords.  
(read Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3)

"A man who denies his past is a man who truly denies himself a future, for he refuses to know himself, and to deny knowledge of oneself is to stumble through life as handicapped as the blind mute." – Tobsha Learner, *The Witch of Cologne*

"Life is filled with unanswered questions, but it is the courage to seek those answers that continues to give meaning to life. You can spend your life wallowing in despair, wondering why you were the one who was led towards the road strewn with pain, or you can be grateful that you are strong enough to survive it." J.D. Stroube, *Caged by Damnation*