

**Sermon for Sunday, April 2, 2023**  
**Palm Sunday - Sunday of the Passion**  
**“Hosanna and Heartache”**  
**Reverend Amy Zalk Larson**  
**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**  
**Decorah, Iowa**

[Click here to read Gospel reading for the day.](#)

Beloved People of God, grace to you and peace in the name of Jesus.

Today we get all the feels: joy, excitement, anger, fear, sorrow.

Worship today reminds me of the book *Atlas of the Heart* by Brené Brown, which explores eighty-seven important human emotions and experiences. This day, Palm Sunday and Sunday of the Passion, feels like a Cliff Notes version of that book. We're welcoming Jesus with glad shouts, longing for him to set us free. Then suddenly we're calling for his death. We're joyous and jeering, courageous and complicit. There's hosanna and heartache.

It's intense, but it's also helpful to hold multiple emotions and experiences at the same time. Our culture doesn't often give us space to do that. Either-or thinking gets in our way especially when it comes to grief - whether that's grief at the death of a loved one, or our grief about hopes dashed, the human condition, or the state of the world.

Author Megan Devine, writes, “We’ve got this idea that there are only two options in grief: you’re either going to be stuck in your pain, doomed to spend the rest of your life rocking in a corner in your basement wearing sackcloth, or you’re going to triumph over grief, be transformed and come back even better than you were before. Two options: on-off, broken or healed.”

Yet, she continues, “There’s this whole middle ground between those two extremes. And finding that middle ground is the real work of grief - finding a place that doesn’t ask us to deny our grief, and doesn’t doom us forever, a place that honors the full breadth of grief, which is really the full breadth of love.”<sup>1</sup>

As followers of Jesus, we get to share in that middle ground together. We grieve the human condition because we're called to love and grief is love persisting. We pray and long and work for and welcome change, even as we acknowledge that we are part of the problem. We are both saint and sinner, broken and beloved. Life is both brutal and beautiful. Author Glennon Doyle combines those two words into my favorite description of life - it is **brutiful**. And in this life, we never arrive at some point that is all sunshine and roses. The tomb is empty, but the cross remains. Joy and grief, sin and forgiveness, death and life persist mingling all together.

Megan Devine writes, “Some things can’t be fixed, they can only be carried.”<sup>2</sup> This Sunday and all of Holy Week shows us we don't carry our grief and sin and pain alone. Jesus carries it with us, for us, with you, for you. God works in all of it to heal and to raise us up again and again.

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<sup>1</sup> Megan Devine <https://refugeingrief.com/2015/10/19/middle-ground-grief/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

We can face this *brutiful* world, our *brutiful* selves with hope.  
We can be people of hope for the sake of the world.