

When Jesus entered Jerusalem last Sunday, the people waving palm branches because they had a plan. Their plan was centered on their idea of Jesus being the Messiah as a great military leader who would free them from the Romans. That was their plan, but God had a different plan. Jesus would be arrested, tortured, and crucified. As we witnessed the events of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, God's plan didn't sound all that great since Jesus was in fact dead.

For his followers, all hope was lost. His disciples were hiding out behind locked doors. Their hope of Jesus being the Messiah was shattered by the cross.

But that is one of the mysteries of God. We don't always understand or even recognize God's plans, especially when we are all wrapped up in the world around us. In Jesus' day, the people wanted a Messiah who would free them and that is who Jesus was and what he did. However, they had "what they were freed from" all wrong. They wanted to be freed from the Romans but God wanted them to be freed from sin, death and the devil.

That is what this day is all about. God's plan for each one of us is to bring us into HIS heavenly kingdom. Ever since original sin with Adam and Eve, there has been a huge gap that separated us from God. We could not bridge that gap on our own so God did the only thing possible that would give us our freedom.

God gave HIS only Son who in turn gave his life just so that we could receive the promise of forgiveness and eternal life. In the Old Testament, God demanded sacrifices that helped to repair the relationships between HIM and the people. The only problem was that those sacrifices never lasted because sin was constant among the people back then just as it is here.

So God sacrificed HIS own son. HE gave HIS son to die for the sins of the world and it was this action that truly set us free. "Christ is risen!" is the cry that gives new hope to all and God's plan came together with resurrection.

So all that is left is a response. As we hear about God's love for us and experience that love in our life, then we are able to respond to that same love by living in a personal relationship with God. The power of the resurrection is nothing without belief because the promises of forgiveness and eternal life are given to those who believe.

Christ is risen! Resurrection is wonderful, but God's plan comes together only after we respond to Jesus and invite others to know him in a personal, intimate way.