

It's hard to follow up that children's message; it really is. I mean, the kids were having such a great time, even though the expressions on a few other faces was fear. But they still had a great time. And you could tell just by knowing them how well they do things and they interact. It was a good reminder that yes, I can be a grumpy old man, especially this week. This week's been really hard. It's been really hard for me. A lot of people have been coming up to me and talking to me about different things that are happening in their lives. And it's making it a hard week for them.

And It's just been crazy. A friend of mine passed away Friday night. Heart attack at 49. And it makes you think about things a little differently, You know, I was already having a rough week. I got into an argument and was told that I don't count. I'll talk a little bit more about that in a minute, But that started my week off. And then I find out that the number of people I know are getting diagnosed with cancer, and that makes me sad. It makes me concerned about them and their well-being. And it reminds me there's so little I can do to help people sometimes.

I know that praying is a lot. I know that we're not alone. That we're all together, but sometimes it just feels like I can't do enough. And then you add that to getting told that I don't count. That increases my thinking that I can't do enough. And it makes me think about a number of different things.

The argument this week was a person I've known for a number of years. She is very high up in the UCC figuratively. You know, the UCC the highest you can get is sitting in these pews. That is the top of the church. Is everybody here, not the rest of the people who think they're important. They are not nearly as significant as the people in the pews. And I was saying that in a meeting. I was reminding them that I do not work for them. I work for you, especially officially now. And it's important that we all hear the people in the pews. And she told me no. What's important is that an ordained Pastor who went through the Seminary is who we need to listen to, and people like me don't count. And we don't matter. Now, I've been with this person working on different things for three years. Trying to support, trying to show how important small town and rural churches are. Trying to show how important people in congregations like ours are. And then she tells me we really don't matter. And I don't believe that. I don't believe that at all. There's a lot of times when people think that things don't matter.

They're still there; they're still in the background. They're still doing the daily work; they're still making things happen.

In today's reading, how many times did Debbie say the word Palms? Don't cheat and look in your thing. How many times did you hear it? You're cheating and reading. Zero. It's not in there at all. We celebrate Palm Sunday every year. We hear the word palm, when we talk about today. We hear the word palm when we talk about Jesus entering into Jerusalem. But it's not there. It's in one of the four gospels. So somewhere it is there. Just like us.

If it wasn't for the palm we would forget how important today is. We would forget the waving of the palm, the showing and the rejoicing. We were all laughing and having a great time as we were, as Ron was leading us here and there. I almost got stuck in a pew. That would have been even better, but we all enjoyed it. We all rejoice in this Sunday. We all reflect upon the palms. We all reflect upon what it means.

Look, we all reflect on the beginning of the happiness of this week. We know that at the end of this week, it's going to get worse before it gets better. We know Jesus is going to be betrayed. We know that he is going to be crucified. We know that he is going to be an utter pain. And people that he thinks should be there for him will not be. We know that Peter, the most trusted disciple will betray him. We know that there's going to be a lot of bad. But we also know, like we've talked about on Wednesday nights, sometimes you have to have bad to get to the good.

Next Sunday will be all about good. It'll be all about him coming back, being resurrected, being shared again his love continually. And it doesn't matter, whose name is said, who's in those groups, who's not in those groups. What matters is that we know what's important. We know that each one of us are important too even though our names were not listed in those gathered to greet him today. Nobody's name was listed. They don't say specifically that the disciples were there. But in our hearts we know they were. It doesn't say that Gyrus was there and his little girl, his 12 year old daughter, Jesus saved. It doesn't say that Zacchaeus was there. It doesn't say that anybody was there directly. It's somebody else overlooking these people. We know they're there. We know the good that they did. We know that they continued to share the story of Jesus. That they continue to share

his love, just like the rest of us, even though some people might say that what we do is unimportant. And even though people might say that who we are is not nearly as significant to them as others, we know better than that.

We know that everyone here is important. We know that every life we touch is important whether they see it or not. We remember we are not alone. We are here for everyone. We are here to share the story. We are here to celebrate the greatness that is to come. Let us pray.