

"Walking with Christ."

Lenten Reflection... Palm Sunday...

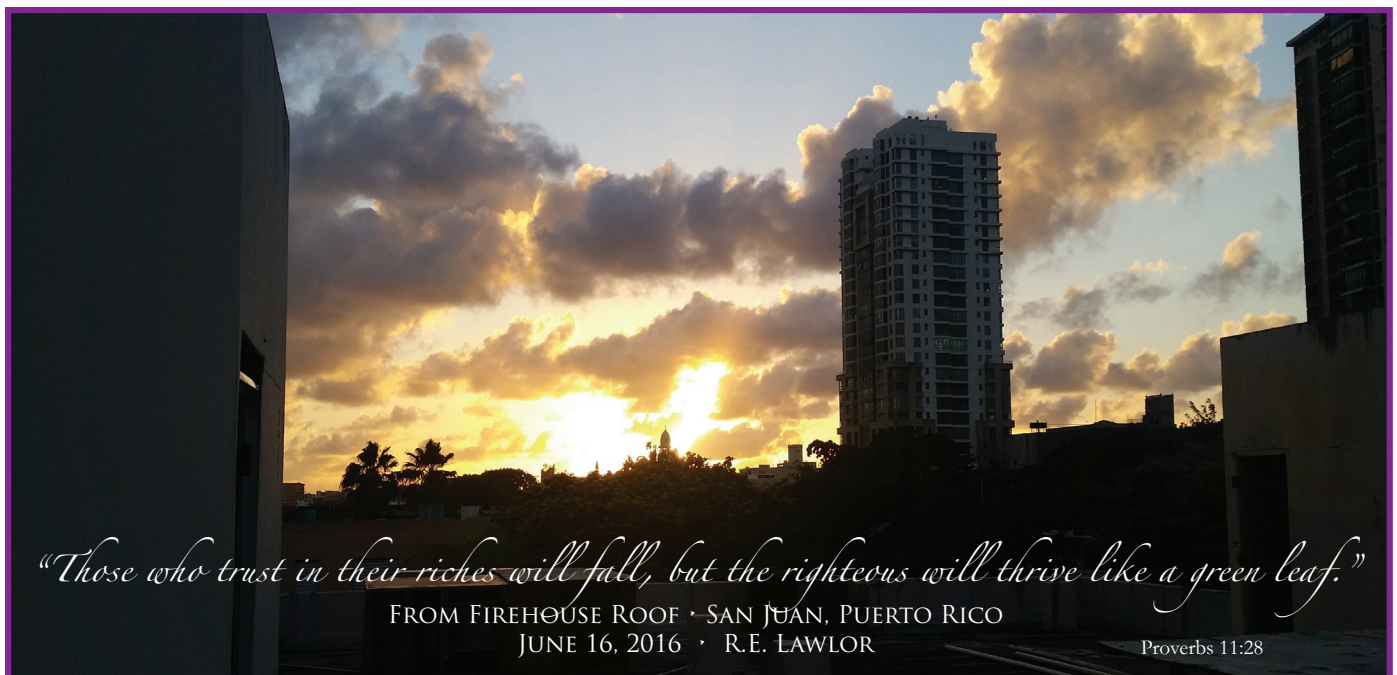
By: Deacon Rick Lawlor

This sunset was taken from the roof of the San Juan Fire Department, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, while on vacation with my family. Fire fighters are incredibly friendly people and always welcome a brother firefighter for an unplanned visit. They gave us the royal treatment, (pun intended) including a tour of their fire station and this incredible view from the roof at sunset. Notice the palm trees in the distance. Palm trees are incredibly strong and sturdy. During a hurricane when other trees such as the mighty oak fall down, palm trees bend and move with the winds, they have strong roots and they are aerodynamic. Another interesting fact is after a powerful storm palm trees grow stronger. The palm tree accepts the storms that come their way as they surrender to the mighty winds. We can learn a lot from palm trees.

This brings me to our Gospel for this Palm Sunday. The branches of the holy and majestic palm tree line the streets of Jerusalem as Jesus the King of the Universe rides into town. Today we hear the first part of the story... triumph... followed by much turmoil and then, eventually more triumph. Triumphs are the book ends to this story, Jesus rides triumphantly into Jerusalem. Jesus our humble King is welcomed with open arms as he rides in on a donkey... obedient... peaceful and loving. This scene opens the story with triumph, then as the week progresses Jesus is betrayed, he is tortured, he suffers greatly, he is crucified and he dies. His body is placed into a tomb and the world is dark for three short days. Triumph just a distant memory, triumph has given way to death, but the story doesn't end there. Jesus is triumphant over all things, even death. Jesus shall soon make his triumphant resurrection. Triumph, followed by pain, followed by death is followed by more triumph. This was the life of Jesus and this is our life too. This is the life of a Christian, each of us has had moments of triumph in our lives, followed by pain and suffering. Rest assured our final chapter has already been written and we too shall rise, we too shall overcome death with a triumphant resurrection.

The story of Palm Sunday is your story and my story, the two bookends are triumphs with some pain and difficulties thrown in the middle. Therefore my friends, this Palm Sunday embrace the joy of triumph and follow the lead of Jesus and the mighty palm tree. Be strong, be flexible, be humble and surrender to God's great plan for your life, place your trust in Jesus and you too shall be triumphant!

May Almighty God Bless you today and always.



"Those who trust in their riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf."

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Proverbs 11:28