

Worship at home – 28th March 2021

Key Scriptures: Mark 11:1-11

Key Themes:

Caught up in celebration.

Jesus enters the City of Jerusalem on the back of a donkey.

Call to Worship:

The gates of Holy Week are open, and we gather to celebrate our King who rides a donkey. We bring to you the best of what we are, Lord Jesus, laying down our lives in service, as you laid down your life for us.

Amen

Hymn: Ride on, ride on in majesty (Henry Hart Millman 1791-1868) StF – 265

Ride on! ride on in majesty!

Hark! all the tribes hosanna cry;

O Savior meek, pursue thy road

with palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!

In lowly pomp ride on to die;

O Christ, thy triumphs now begin

o'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!

The angel-squadrons of the sky

look down with sad and wondering eyes

to see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!

Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;

the Father on his sapphire throne

expects his own anointed Son.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!

In lowly pomp ride on to die;

bow thy meek head to mortal pain,

then take, O God, thy power, and reign.

Prayers: Adoration:

Father, enshrined in mystery, we adore you. Closing our eyes, we seek you within, and praise you for meeting us there.

Son, riding on a colt, we adore you. We praise you for your generous love, one with us.

Holy Spirit, guiding and inspiring us, we adore you. Through you we praise the mystery and the majesty that manifested in frail flesh, yet overcame it.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in adoration we celebrate your victory. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Eager to emulate the first Palm Sunday crowd, we picture ourselves casting our cloaks before Jesus and joining the celebration. Would we, though, if it were to happen again today? An impoverished preacher on the humblest of beasts – would we cast our finest before him? Tear off our wool and cashmere coats, our leather jackets, and throw them down for his donkey to trample? We confess, Lord, that we would probably be loath to leave our homes. We confess that we are carried away by stories and the seeming romance of them. Those people threw their possessions before Jesus, giving the best they had. Forgive us for holding back so much from him, and help us to celebrate with all that we have.

Amen.

Assurance of forgiveness:

Lord, thank you for forgiving us when we have been mean with our attitudes.

Jesus forgives us and open our hearts and our minds to how we should think and feel.

Lord, thank you for forgiving us when we have withheld our possessions.

Jesus, who had nothing, forgives us and shows us how to share.

Lord, thank you for forgiving us when we have kept ourselves to ourselves.

Jesus, who lived and died for others, forgives us and calls us to join him.

Amen.

Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29 - A Prayer of Thanks for Victory

118 Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good,
and his love is eternal.

² Let the people of Israel say,
“His love is eternal.”

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of the Temple;
I will go in and give thanks to the LORD!

²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD;
only the righteous can come in.

²¹ I praise you, LORD, because you heard me,
because you have given me victory.

²² The stone which the builders rejected as worthless
turned out to be the most important of all.

²³ This was done by the LORD;
what a wonderful sight it is!

²⁴ This is the day of the LORD's victory;
let us be happy, let us celebrate!

²⁵ Save us, LORD, save us!
Give us success, O LORD!

²⁶ May God bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD!
From the Temple of the LORD we bless you.

²⁷ The LORD is God; he has been good to us.
With branches in your hands, start the festival
and march around the altar.

²⁸ You are my God, and I give you thanks;
I will proclaim your greatness.

²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good,
and his love is eternal.

Reflection:

- This is the day of victory the psalmist writes.
- This is the day when the Lord's anointed comes.
- This is the day to celebrate when even the rocks and stone will cry out.
- But then the full truth is exposed in verse 22.
- "The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all."
- Jesus is the one who on Palm Sunday rides into the city in triumph but he is also the stone which will later be rejected, tried and crucified.
- Yet this rejected stone in turn becomes the cornerstone.
- The focal point, the most important rock on which the faith is built.
- This psalm is one of celebration and hope, but it also points to the death of Jesus and as we all know there cannot be resurrection without crucifixion and death.
- So let us walk the journey again with Jesus to the foot of the cross and beyond, knowing that he went through it all for us, as that our sins might be forgiven and so that we might be put right with God.
- Amen

Reading: Mark 11:1-11 - The Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem

11 As they approached Jerusalem, near the towns of Bethphage and Bethany, they came to the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of his disciples on ahead ² with these instructions: "Go to the village there ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a colt tied up that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ And if someone asks you why you are doing that, say that the Master^[a] needs it and will send it back at once."

⁴ So they went and found a colt out in the street, tied to the door of a house. As they were untying it, ⁵ some of the bystanders asked them, "What are you doing, untying that colt?"

⁶ They answered just as Jesus had told them, and the crowd let them go. ⁷ They brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks over the animal, and Jesus got on. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches in the field and spread them on the road. ⁹ The people who were in front and those who followed behind began to shout, "Praise God! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ God bless the coming kingdom of King David, our father! Praise be to God!"

¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem, went into the Temple, and looked around at everything. But since it was already late in the day, he went out to Bethany with the twelve disciples.

Reflection: The voice of triumph

I was born in humble poverty, and learned a carpenter's trade. I was called and set apart by my father, who named me his beloved son. I was driven into the desert, and tempted by the devil to sin. But as I told him, humanity does not live by bread alone, it is fed by the very life of God. So I began my earthly ministry, preaching and teaching. Healing and hoping that God's people would open their eyes to see Him among them. Some did, they turned away from sin, and repented, but most missed the point completely.

My final week on the planet began in triumph, with cheers of happiness, songs of victory, and a new hope for the future unleashed. Everywhere we looked, our land displayed signs of occupation, the Roman army held the upper hand, and they were never afraid to show it. The people of Israel cowered in the shadows, walked with their head hung low and submitting to their oppressors. They sort a way out, they longed for a king to ride into the city on a charger, who rally the people and call them to arms. They needed the awaited Messiah, who would save them and recuse them, as Moses had done in the days of old. However, all that had been tired. A new way was needed now, and I was that way, that truth and that life.

I sent my friends ahead of me, with instructions to go the village of Bethphage and find an unriden colt. I mounted here, at the city limits for good reason. It was the furthest point at which bread could be baked for use in the Temple. To start the journey here, would send a clear message to those at the top. A direct indication that I was the unique bread, that would be offered and prepared to create a fresh definition of temple.

As we moved off the crowds began to gather, hundreds and thousands of the them, men, women and children. They ran and cut down palm leaves, a symbol of our national identity, demonstrating a new defiance toward the enemy. The removed their coats and laid them at the feet of the animal, granting me celebrity status and hailing me as their new king. The chief priests and those in authority called for silence, but this was God's party and even the rocks and stones themselves cried out. The soldiers were on edge, lining our route like pillars of granite, swords and spears drawn, just to remind us who was in charge.

My heart was full of joy, to see the citizens of heaven reclaiming their place, but I knew it was only a matter of time. It wouldn't be long before these same voices would be singing a different tune. I held hope and fear, gladness and sadness, aspiration and distain, in tangent. The crowd would turn, and I would go from monarch to criminal in days. Those that shouted for my coronation, would scream for my blood, and I would wear a different crown, in a very different kind of kingdom.

I am the voice of triumph, of hearts stirred and passions awakened, but offer a new way of being of peaceful rebellion and unconditional love.

Pause for Thought:

- Jesus redefined kingship, and what it meant to be the awaited Messiah. How might we redefine church of us today, and what might that look like in our own context?
- How might it have felt to have been in the crowd on that first Palm Sunday, what tensions might have been experienced.
- In Luke's version of the story Jesus comments that even if all the people we silent the rocks and stone will shout for joy. How are we going to join the celebrating this Palm Sunday and what would it mean for us to lay down our very lives at the feet of Jesus?
- Spend some time in silence to reflect for yourselves on these questions.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession:

Jesus – riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

Loving God, we pray for the leaders of the nations and their people for...

Your kingdom come: **your will be done.**

Jesus – sharing a last meal with his friends.

Loving God, we pray that we may be faithful and humble to one another.

Your kingdom come: **your will be done.**

Jesus – praying on the Mount of Olives.

Loving God, we pray for those seeking your strength and guidance at times of anxiety and fear for...

Your kingdom come: **your will be done.**

Jesus – being betrayed by Judas denied by Peter.

Loving God, we pray that we may remain faithful to you through all the testing times in our lives.

Your kingdom come: **your will be done.**

Jesus – being tried by the authorities

Loving God, we pray for those who face condemnation for doing what they believe you want them to do, for...

Your kingdom come: **your will be done.**

Jesus – being condemned to death by the crowd.

Loving God, we pray for the courage to stand up for our faith in you.

Your kingdom come: **your will be done.**

Jesus – being crucified and suffering.

Loving God, we pray for those we know, who are suffering physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually.

Your kingdom come: **your will be done.**

Jesus – dying upon the cross.

Loving God, may we love you to the end of our lives and show others the way to you.

Your kingdom come: your will be done.

Brain Margetts – Dalwood

Gill and Geoff Nicholas – Axminster.

Those who have experienced bereavement or who have received difficult news.

Amen

Hymn: All glory, laud, and honour (St. Theodulph of Orleans (d.821) – translated by John Mason Neale (1811-1856) – Stf - 262

All glory, laud, and honour
to thee, Redeemer, King!
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.

Thou art the King of Israel,
thou David's royal Son,
who in the Lord's Name comest,
the King and Blessed One.

The company of angels
are praising thee on high;
and mortal men and all things
created make reply.
The people of the Hebrews
with palms before thee went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before thee we present.

To thee before thy passion
they sang their hymns of praise;
to thee, now high exalted,
our melody we raise.
Thou didst accept their praises;
accept the prayers we bring,
who in all good delightest,
thou good and gracious King.

All glory, laud, and honour
to thee, Redeemer, King!
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.

Blessing:

Everything I am Lord, and everything I do.
Help me to be always more like you.
Teach me to be yours, Lord, Show me when I'm wrong.
Help me to be always more like you.
You accepted all, Lord, help everyone to find the way.
Help me to be always more like you. **Amen**