

Worship@Home 24th March 2024
Sixth Sunday in Lent: Palm Sunday
With Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

We come to prepare for the holiest of weeks. We will journey through praise, with joy on our lips; we will travel through betrayal and death, cradling hope deep in our hearts. Jesus leads us through this week, and we will follow, for he is the life we long for, he is the Word who sustains us. We wave palm branches in anticipation, we lay our love before him, to cushion his walk. Setting aside all power, glory, and might, he comes: Modelling humility and obedience for all of us.

Hosanna! Hosanna!

Blessed is the One who brings us the kingdom of God.

Prayer written by Thom Shuman at Lectionary Liturgies blog. <http://www.lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.ca/> Reposted on RE:Worship: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/02/call-to-worship-for-holy-week.html>

STF 64 – Praise is Rising

<https://youtu.be/GjTFK5mPfs0?feature=shared>

Praise is rising, eyes are turning to you,
we turn to you
Hope is stirring, hearts are yearning for you;
we long for you

*'Cause when we see you,
we find strength to face the day
In your Presence all our fears are washed away,
washed away.*

*Hosanna, hosanna
You are the God who saves us,
worthy of all our praises
Hosanna, hosanna
Come have your way among us;
We welcome you here, Lord Jesus.*

Hear the sound of hearts returning to you;
we turn to you.
In your Kingdom broken lives are made new;
you make us all things new.

'Cause when we see you....

By Brenton Brown and Paul Baloche. Words & Music © 2005
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CCL:1 Song Number: 4662491

Please read:

Mark 11: 1-11

<https://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Mark+11:1-11&version=nrsv>

Time to Reflect

This Sunday, which marks the beginning of Holy Week, we observe Jesus' entry into Jerusalem riding on a colt (Mark 11:7, Luke 19:35) or colt and donkey (Matthew 21:7) or simply a donkey (John 12:14). He is greeted by crowds of people laying down their garments and leafy branches to welcome him into the city (Mark 11:8). In John's Gospel it specifically mentions palm branches being brought while the crowd shouted out 'hosanna' which means 'save us' (John 12:13).

Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a colt/donkey fulfilling the prophetic utterance of the prophet Zachariah who stated:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey."
Zechariah 9:9 (New Revised Standard Version Bible:
Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989)

Yet by Good Friday the public reaction to Jesus' presence in Jerusalem will have dramatically changed. Cries of 'Hosanna' will have been replaced by the cry 'crucify him'. In less than a week Jesus goes from being announced as a king to being denounced as a criminal.

Perhaps the reason for this sudden shift in the crowds around Jesus comes down to the messianic expectations of the people. It would appear that many expected Jesus to behave as an earthly Davidic King who was there to restore Israel and to expel her occupiers through force. The waving of palm branches, a symbol of Jewish nationalism, might have been an indication of this. Jesus' arrest by the authorities in Jerusalem and his commitment to non-violence towards the Roman oppressors may therefore have severely disappointed those who had very different expectations of the Messiah.

Jesus' statement to Pilate that "my Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36) made it clear that Jesus was not the king of a temporal earthly empire but rather an eternal one that goes beyond our own world. Jesus had not come to provoke armed insurrection in Jerusalem but as the prince of peace came to restore and redeem humanity through the cross.

Jesus' journey to the cross, and onto the resurrection, would be the means by which the Kingdom of heaven would be open to all who accept God's gracious invitation. His death and rising would demonstrate the unbounded love that God had for all humankind. Through Christ, forgiveness and reconciliation with God is fully realised and the whole of creation offered divine redemption.

As we celebrate Palm Sunday, and welcome Jesus into our hearts, it is important for us to remember that Jesus is Lord of our whole lives and not just of the time that that we spend celebrating on a Sunday. Christ asks us to follow him in the way of self-sacrificial love every day. This means putting aside our own selfish wants or agendas and instead embracing God's will for all humanity; built around his righteousness and love for every human being. This Palm Sunday we remember that welcoming Jesus and his Kingdom involves embracing God's purposes for us and the world; a world transformed by God's grace and holy love. So let us welcome Jesus the king into our hearts and minds once again and commit ourselves to serving him in his way of love.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:
The needs of the world...
The Church and its calling...
Loved ones going through difficult times...
For peace, justice, and reconciliation...
In Jesus name. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

StF 264 – Make way, make way

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlgf6UHg8Ak>

Make way, make way, for Christ the King
In splendour arrives
Fling wide the gates and welcome Him
Into your lives

*Make way! (Make way!)
Make way! (Make way!)
For the King of kings
(For the King of kings)
Make way! (Make way!)
Make way! (Make way!)
And let His kingdom in*

He comes the broken hearts to heal,
The prisoners to free;
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
The blind shall see.

And those who mourn with heavy hearts
Who weep and sigh,
With laughter, joy and royal crown
He'll beautify.

We call you now to worship Him
As Lord of all,
To have no gods before Him,
Their thrones must fall!

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Final Prayer

O Christ, you entered the city as a poor man
not in style but simply, yet still you caused
uproar, and questions everywhere;
you drew the expectations of a hungry crowd,
and brought buried conflicts to the light.

May we, who are sometimes swayed by the
crowd's approval, and who often avoid conflict
for fear of its cost to us, hold fast to the gospel
of peace and justice and follow faithfully in
your way of compassion and solidarity
with those who are poor and excluded,
wherever it may lead us. **Amen.**

Prayer written by Kathy Galloway, and posted on the "Monthly Prayers" page of the Christian Aid website: www.christianaid.org.uk
Reposted on RE:Worship: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2017/04/a-palm-sunday-prayer.html>