



Worship at Home – Palm Sunday – 28th March

Father God help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

Amen

Hymn 583: Ride on, ride on

Welcome

The Lord be with you,
and also with you

Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.
Amen**

Prayer of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal through Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen**

Collect

True and humble king, hailed by the crowd as Messiah: grant us the faith to know you and love you, that we may be found beside you on the way of the cross, which is the path of glory. **Amen**

New Testament Reading: Philippians 2: 5 – 11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hymn 201: Give me joy

Gospel Reading: Mark 11: 1 - 11

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

Glory to you, O Lord

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately."' They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Revd Petra Shakeshaft

It's Passover in Jerusalem somewhere circa 30 AD

The Jews are gathering together on Temple Mount for the greatest Festival of the year; the festival that celebrates the freedom of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

And Look! Here comes a procession.

Listen! Hear the pounding of the horses' hooves on the earth.

Hear the drums beating, the feet marching perfectly together in unison.

See golden eagles raised up to the sun,
helmets glinting, swords just an arms-length away,
Soldiers on horseback and on foot,
dust rising with each tread.

In they come, through the west gate, with Pontius Pilate at the head, proud on his stallion, bringing his cavalry from Caesaria by the sea to let the Jews know who is in charge.

It is his custom to come at Passover with extra reinforcements for the Temple Mount.

It is a demonstration of power meant to crush any attempted uprising and the parade an annual spectacle.

Everyone, including Jesus, is aware this will take place;
that the Romans would make their power and authority known
and the Jews would know who was their master.

Traditionally, the procession would appear on the first day of the Festival,
through the front gate of the city;
troops in battle-dress, armed for combat;
inspiring awe and terror and obedience.

But there are no cheering crowds,
just curiosity and silent resentment.

On the other side of the city, another procession is entering through the East gate.

See, there are no immaculately dressed suntanned soldiers marching in time;
no proud leader sneering down from his elegant beast,
no leather saddle or bridle, no glinting of gold,
just an itinerant preacher-man riding on a borrowed donkey,
seated on a borrowed coat.

There, his band of followers chanting,
laying down cloaks and palms, waving branches.

Hear them cry, *Hosanna to the Son of David!*

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

The words of the prophet echo down the years,

Lo, your king comes to you, humble and riding on a donkey.

At one end of the city, Pilate arrives in magnificence, splendour and brutality,
and at the other, another king brings in the reign of peace;
a different concept of kingdom and kingship, the prophet foresaw.

In this alternative, subverted triumphal entry, Jesus is proclaimed the king
who brings salvation, freedom from slavery and peace.

What kind of king will the people choose?

This alternative procession is dangerous, provocative, inflammatory – it is prophetic, highly dramatic and meant to convey a message about who Jesus is. The two kingdoms are juxtaposed; the kingdom of imperial domination and the kingdom of God.

The Jewish leaders might have welcomed, even supported this audacious rise for freedom from the Romans by one of their own, but the Temple officials are in the pay of Rome.

They have earned freedom to worship their God rather than the Roman gods as long as order, that is, Roman order is maintained and the Roman taxes paid. Should that order break down, well, then there would be a massive price to pay.

And of course, in 70AD that price is paid as Jerusalem is destroyed the Temple torn down and rivers of Jewish blood spilled over its steps.

But here, and now, the leaders need to calm this band of rebels down; make sure things don't escalate,

or their illegally gotten lands, wealth and power will be in the balance.

This Jesus really could wreck things for them.

Of course, Jesus is as opposed to the corruption of the Temple leadership as he is to Roman rule. What the people see and hope for though, is a procession that opposes but equals the Roman procession.

They want to see an equivalent measure of might and force, bring down the Romans forever.

But Jesus's band of followers are not the powerful and mighty, the rulers of the elite, they are drawn from the poor and despised, the left out, the marginalised, blind, crippled, tax-collectors, loose women, fishermen;

the people Jesus had lavished his time, care and attention and love on; people he had healed, whose lives he had repaired, changed, forgiven.

The Hosannas ring out today, but in just four days' time, those same voices will cry out, *Crucify!* As Jesus's betrayal and arrest, puts their own lives at risk by association.

What kind of king do they want?

Not a king who will be pinned to a tree alongside common criminals.

Not a king who will be dead – what use is a dead king?

There are still two processions 2,000 years later.

There is the one we recall here, in church today;

the one with the donkey and the palm leaves and the cheering crowds and the hope.

The other one, characterised still, by corrupt regimes and organisations across the world,

That which belongs to people, whether property, status, wealth, opportunity, dignity, is still taken by force and people pressed down by self-serving administrations blind or oblivious to human suffering.

And we still have a choice about these processions.

We can stand by quietly, maybe even resentfully,

and watch as the weak are downtrodden as the impressive, parade past,

or we can follow the man on the donkey; we can be seen and heard crying Hosanna Standing up for the poor and weak, including the excluded, loving the unloved.

That's the procession that leads to Calvary and to the Cross on Good Friday.

It is a sacrificial journey that demands, as T S Eliot puts it, not less than everything. But it also leads to the Garden and Easter morning; to new life, eternal life on the other side of the Cross.

I'm struck by the wonderful irony that 2,000 years later, it's the little ramshackle procession with the borrowed donkey and raggedy coats and waving palms that we remember. And Pilate, what of him? he was a nasty piece of work, sure, but what is he best remembered for? Not the procession, but that he washed his hands of Jesus.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

The Peace

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Hymn 14: All glory, laud and honour

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever.
Amen.

Remembering the Lord's Supper

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

Hymn 657: There is a green hill far away

Closing Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen

If you have any prayer or pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact
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