

All Saints' Church Thornton Hough



A service for Palm Sunday

Sunday 28th March 2021

Online

The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

Introduction

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, during Lent we have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice for the celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection. Today we begin this solemn celebration in union with the Church throughout the world. Christ enters his own city to complete his work as our Saviour, to suffer, to die and to rise again. Let us go with him in faith and love, so that, united with him in his sufferings, we may share his risen life.

Hymn: Ride on ride on in majesty *(sung by St Martin's Voices)*

- 1 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark, all the tribes hosanna cry.
Thy humble beast pursues his road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.
- 2 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.
- 3 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
the wingèd squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.
- 4 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The last and fiercest strife is nigh:
the Father on his sapphire throne
awaits his own anointed Son.
- 5 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.

Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868)

Mark 11: 1-11

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as king

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly."' "

They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, 'What are you doing, untying that colt?' They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

'Hosanna!'

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

'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!'

'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Reflection

Hosanna!

Picture the noise and jubilation in the streets of Jerusalem. The oppressed people in this occupied city are desperately waiting for their Messiah. The Jews were well-versed in their scriptures. They knew that their Messiah, their Anointed One who would rescue them from Roman rule would not be coming on a fiery steed.

The prophet Zechariah put it thus:

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!

Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you,

righteous and victorious,

lowly and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9)

So here, entering Jerusalem, is a man whose reputation has spread throughout Judea; a man who has released people from the captivity of illness, disgrace, death; a man who has stood up to the Jewish leaders and told them of the need to change their hearts and not get trapped in legalism. He enters on a donkey colt, exactly as the prophet had foretold. The people are jubilant; the wave of excitement and anticipation is overwhelming. Here is their liberator, their King! They call out, “Hosanna!”

The exuberant crowd have become caught up in thinking that Jesus will be their liberator. And we know that this same crowd will go on to bay for Jesus to be handed over to be crucified in just a short space of time. What is happening here? Is this just an example of the fickleness of human nature and the beginning of the unfolding tragedy of Jesus death on the cross?

As is always the case with Jesus, there is a more profound meaning. Whilst it is undeniable that we observe a group mentality at work which can whip a crowd up to cheer for a man in one week and send him to his death the next, that word “Hosanna!” points to something else.

We think of this exclamation as a cry of praise, of confidence in God as Saviour, but this language of praise which we see used in the Psalms is more of a plea – “Save us now!” Help! It suggests that the person calling out is putting all their confidence in God because they need him to rescue them, a cry of trusting dependence.

Jesus wanted to save these people – he loved them! The very name of Jesus means, “God saves.” But did the crowds that gathered *really* want to be saved? Their idea of salvation was not the same as his. He wanted to change their hearts, to see them accept him as Lord. That was not the sort of revolution they had in mind.

What is striking here is Jesus’ “otherness”. He goes to the temple late in the day, and, not seeking to court the praise or favour of the crowd, he withdraws to Bethany, a couple of miles away from the big city, to be with his closest friends. The journey to his suffering on the cross is under way.

Where are we in this story? Do we treat God’s saving love with the air of presumption which the crowds showed when they threw down branches and cloaks along the way? What does that word “Hosanna” mean for you? As we journey through Holy Week towards Easter Sunday, let’s take the time to draw aside and look with fresh eyes at this staggering love story.

Prayers

Let us pray.

Loving God

Your Son Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as a different kind of king. You call your followers to be different too. We pray for the Church, that Christians of all denominations may be distinctive in their love and service for you. We pray for those whose faith has led to persecution, and ask that you would give them your courage and strength. Lord, in your mercy, ***Hear our prayer.***

Loving God

Jesus served his disciples at the Last Supper by washing his disciples' feet. We pray for all those who serve others – all those in the NHS, Social care; other essential services; all who volunteer or are good neighbours there for one another. We pray for those who serve you in public office; our MPs and councillors, and those who will put themselves forward for election in May.

Lord, in your mercy, ***Hear our prayer.***

Loving God,

Jesus was distressed and anguished over what lay ahead as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. We pray for all who are distressed or in anguish today. We pray for those suffering with mental illness; for those who are living in fear because of financial difficulties; for those who feel hopeless or helpless in their circumstances. We pause to remember those who we know, and also commend to you whose distress is known to you alone.

Lord, in your mercy, ***Hear our prayer.***

Loving God,

Jesus came in love to save the whole world. We pray for those areas where violence, war and grinding poverty are normal. We pray for the situation in Myanmar, and remember the plight of refugees on the borders with Pakistan. We pray for those places blighted by gun crime, and pray for the people of Boulder, Colorado.

Lord in your mercy, ***Hear our prayer.***

Loving God,

Jesus defeated death on the cross and rose to life again. We thank you for the hope that you have set before us and pray for those who

are mourning the loss of a loved one today. May they know your hope and comfort.

Lord, in your mercy, ***Hear our prayer.***

The Collect for Palm Sunday

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.***

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray as our Saviour taught us:

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil;
for thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: All Glory Laud and honour *(sung by St. Martin's Voices)*

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

1 Thou art the King of Israel,
 thou David's royal Son
 who in the Lord's name comest,
 the King and blessèd one:
Refrain

2 The company of angels
 are praising thee on high,

and mortal men and all things
created make reply:

Refrain

3 The people of the Hebrews
with palms before thee went:
our praise and prayer and anthems
before thee we present:

Refrain

4 To thee before thy passion
they sang their hymns of praise:
to thee now high exalted
our melody we raise:

Refrain

5 Thou didst accept their praises,
accept the prayers we bring,
who in all good delightest,
thou good and gracious King:

Refrain

Theodulf of Orleans (c.750-821) translated by John M Neale (1818-1866)

The Blessing

May Christ,
who accepted the cup of sacrifice
in obedience to the Father's will,
keep you steadfast as you walk with him the way of his cross.
And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

The hymns used in this service are sung by St Martin's Voices. These have been produced by the Church of England, working with St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Royal School of Church Music.

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