

St Nicholas Church, Sighthill

Palm Sunday and Holy communion 28 March 2021

On Palm Sunday we remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey. This was a triumphal entry, but the events of Holy Week offer a stark reminder that this triumphal entry soon turned sour. There was no fairy tale ending; instead, the entry into Jerusalem was the prelude to Jesus's betrayal and death.

So, the transition from Palm Sunday into Holy Week provides (especially at this time) a place for us to bring to God our fear, restlessness, pain, failures, disappointed hopes and experience of betrayal. All of that is what Jesus experienced on the cross.

It is these experiences that are transformed by the celebration of resurrection on Easter Sunday. If Easter is to have any reality, then the services of Palm Sunday and Holy Week need to offer opportunities for reflection on difficult aspects of our life.

Call to worship and opening prayer

Leader: Gathered here, let each one of us in our hearts step aside from the crowd to realise the treasures of this day, as we lay our worship before God who deserves our devotion. And in that devotion, let us sing "hosannah"! Welcome to Christ the King! Would we wave aside all we have learned?

All: No, we take it up and lay it before God as an offering.

Leader: Would we wave aside the challenges that lie ahead?

All: No, we face them and lay our fears before God for our blessing.

Leader: Would we wave aside the vision of love and peace?

All: No, we will seize the day and follow Jesus on the Way.

Rejoice, rejoice, you sons of Zion! Shout for joy, you daughters of Jerusalem! Look and see, your king is coming to you. He comes triumphant and victorious, yet humble and riding on a donkey.

Acclaimed by crowds and carolled by children, He moves from the peace of the countryside to the corridors of power. The Lord now will save his people, as a shepherd saves his flock from danger. Like precious stones in a crown, we will shine in God's own land.

As the people spread their coats and palm branches on the ground to welcome you into Jerusalem, so we welcome you into our lives this morning. King of Glory, King of Peace, Servant King, reign in our hearts and lives this day and all days, that we might praise your holy name. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord Hosanna in the highest.

Almighty and ever living God, in Your tender love for the human race, You sent your Son - our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to take upon Him our nature, and

suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of His great humility. Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of His suffering, and also share in His resurrection; through Jesus the Messiah, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

The Lord's Prayer



Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-23 'A Song of Victory'

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His steadfast love endures for ever! Let Israel say, 'His steadfast love endures for ever.' Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank You that You have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.



Brief Reflection

On Palm Sunday (aka Passion Sunday) we read the opening lines and the final section of Psalm 118, which celebrate God's faithfulness: "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever!" (v1) This Psalm resonates with wonder and thankfulness. It shows us how God has taken what no one else wanted and made something amazing.

It encourages us all to join in worship in language which resonates with Jesus's entrance into Jerusalem: "Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord." It also has an underlying sense of transformation. Rabbi Daniel F. Polish points out that Like all Psalms, this Psalm describes things moving in one direction and then abruptly reversing themselves for the better ... It affirms that no matter what sloughs we may find ourselves in, there can be a reversal of fortune. The world can turn upside down and what is but a distant vision of contentment and joy can become our immediate

reality.” Verse 22 is key to this reading: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.” In Christian tradition, the stone that becomes the cornerstone is associated with Jesus Christ from a very early stage, including in words attributed to Christ Himself. Psalm 118 in this way points towards Jesus’s trial, death and resurrection.

Prof Dr Charlotte Methuen, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Glasgow

Holy Communion

(Tom) Call to Communion

Face the music. Jesus calls us to follow him, not just to another party of praise, but to the hard work of bringing God’s love and justice into this world of violence and fear. Let us prepare ourselves to come to the table of the Lord - a table to which He invites all who are happy, prepared and able to come and share bread and wine as we remember him, Christ who died so we would no longer live for ourselves, but for the one who died and was raised to life for us.

A Modern Affirmation

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true Church, apostolic and universal, whose holy faith we now declare:

All:

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, power and love, whose mercy is over all his works, and whose will is ever directed to his children's good.

We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, the gift of the Father's unfailing grace, the ground of our hope, and the promise of our deliverance from sin and death.

We believe in the Holy Spirit as the divine presence in our lives, whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance of the truth of Christ and find strength and help in time of need.

We believe that this faith should manifest itself in the service of love as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord, to the end that the kingdom of God may come upon the earth. Amen.

(John) Source of all Life, we gather as your people, broken and regretful. We like the path of life to be easy, comfortable, untroubled. We get angry and impatient when problems arise and hardships persist.

We like the way to be fun and happy. We do not want the hard way that Jesus takes. We like power on our side and miracles for our benefit. We do not like to confront the powers that be nor to face the drudgery of everyday living. We want to live free of fear, confrontation and risk. We do not like to face the music.

Our father in heaven – the Merciful One - hears the confession of our hearts and lips, forgives us our sins and strengthens us to be truly faithful. Loving Father, help and empower us to follow Jesus, to face the music and to live as a people who are forgiven, free and equipped for new life lived to the full in Christ, Amen.

(Tom) Words of Institution

As we hear once again the words of Paul describing the Last Supper Jesus had with His friends before His arrest, trial and death, let us each feel a new commitment to journey with Jesus Christ, to face the music, to face hardships, disappointments, and even suffering and

harm for what is right. Hear the words Paul shared with the people of Corinth, explaining this mysterious and powerful gathering: For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when we was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

When we share the bread, we share in the bread of life. When we drink from the cup, we share the cup of suffering.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

On this first day of the week that is called “Holy Week,” we thank you Jesus Christ for the courage to do your Father’s will. Strengthen us through this meal to stand by you, to truly be your courageous body of the faithful, and, where necessary, to accept the risk and confrontation as elements of our faithfulness. As this week passes, speak to us through its events, reminding us of your constant love, surprising grace, and caring power. Amen.

Come, dear friends in Christ, for all things are ready.

**THE BODY OF CHRIST, THE BREAD OF HEAVEN
THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, THE CUP OF SALVATION**

Prayer after communion

(Heather) For the bread that we have eaten, for the wine we have tasted, for the life that you have given, Father, Son and Holy Spirit - we will praise you

For the life of Christ within us, turning all our fears to freedom, helping us to live for others,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit - we will praise you

For the strength of Christ to lead us in our living and our dying in the end, with all your people

Father, Son and Holy Spirit - we will praise you, Amen

Filled with life, we now offer ourselves to be life bringers in the world. Filled with the hope of Christ, we embrace the promise of eternity and the call to make it known at every opportunity.

Through us, may we see you do new things in our lives and may see and new beginnings, dreams come true and more people in our communities live happy, meaningful, independent and fulfilled lives. We pray in Jesus name, Amen.

(Tom) THE PEACE IS SHARED

May the peace of Christ be with us all.



Hymn: Ride On, Ride On’ by Ferryhill Parish Church
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gu21Jz6rgo>

Closing prayer and Benediction

And so it begins, we walk through this week, from palms now to passion, it’s Jesus we seek. Each moment we walk through these days with Jesus, is the time to see people, the way Jesus sees us.

As we walk through these days, may the love we now know be spread to each person we meet on the go. And may God who whose face shines upon us with grace from above; who looks on us with such joy and such favour give us peace and life to savour, Amen