

Palm Sunday

The Glory Of The Cross 2

March 28th

The Triumphal Entry

John 12: 12 – 19

This is a story of 2 very different weeks

The 1st week I want to talk about was way back in 2006 before Ewelina and I were married. My Grandad was sat in his usual chair telling stories about his brother (My Uncle Len) and my Grandma. I loved hearing stories from my Grandad about Football, family WW2. Here we were again gathered together but this time Ewelina was there. A week later my Grandad sadly passed away. What a difference a week made in my life.

The second week I want to mention was a week at Christchurch Baptist in 2007. Ewelina and I knew that time was coming to an end there and I hadn't found a job and we decided that if nothing had changed over the course of the week we would go back to live in Poland. We spent some time in prayer at the weekend and then the very next day a phone call came from Lincoln Baptist – the Pastor was looking for a Youth Worker that spoke Polish. What a difference a week makes.

How about you? Have you ever had one of those weeks where it was life changing? It doesn't necessarily have to be a bad experience it could be a week that brought something amazing. Maybe (if you're at the service) when we go to break out rooms maybe you would like to share your story.

This past week we had a day of reflection marking a year since the first lockdown. Sadly for many people during this pandemic we have seen lives turned upside down and in a really short period of time. We have been confronted by life and death! How has this past year affected you ?

Today's story also marks the beginning of a week that was to change the world and what a difference a week made in the lives of Jesus' disciples and Israel.

Welcome to the start of Holy Week! We start with Jesus the Messiah coming through the gates of Jerusalem to the sound of HOSANNA, HOSANNA which in Hebrew means Save. 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord', 'Blessed is the king of Israel'.

We are going to watch a video where a Roman Soldier describes the Triumphal entry from his perspective

(YouTube video by LAMPS)

Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey fulfilling prophecy 500 years earlier by the Prophet Zechariah 9:9

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.

A crowd of followers followed Jesus to Jerusalem. They had seen Lazarus rise from the dead and were amazed! Bethany was only 2 miles away from Jerusalem so not far. You can imagine how quickly word got out about someone being brought back to life through the streets of Jerusalem. Now there were thousands of people gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover.

The Chief Priests just couldn't control Jesus and they had no answer to the miracles that Jesus was performing. So they plotted to arrest and kill Jesus and they even plotted to kill Lazarus!!! (Jn 12:10)

John 12:17 says that those who witnessed Lazarus coming back to life were spreading the word and as a result many came out to see Jesus.

"Look how the whole world has gone after him" said the Pharisees.

When we see films of Jesus I'm not sure they always do this part justice. The atmosphere would have been electric, the noise deafening. Is this the man that will bring freedom to Israel! Many would have wanted Jesus to go in and overthrow the Romans but as we all know Jesus had other plans

In the space of 1 week the crowds that had gathered to praise Jesus turned up to shout "Crucify Him". Jesus' friends ran away and hid, hardly anybody was there

for Jesus as he hung on the cross. What a difference a week makes! How Fickle people are!

But my question is are we any different 2000 years later?

Do we try and turn Jesus into a Messiah that fits our expectations?

Throughout the gospels, Jesus consistently refuses to live up to people's expectations of a Rabbi, let alone The Messiah. And so it is in this final week. The crowds that welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem may have heard of some of the miraculous works that he was said to have done whilst in Galilee and the following that he was able to attract. They may have taken a particular understanding from some of their scriptures. From this they may have built up a picture of who Jesus is and what Jesus would do for them, that was not entirely correct. I wonder if I do the same. I wonder if because of this, I also experience the kind of disappointment that results from false or unfulfilled hopes.

Another question: is my relationship with Jesus 'ME' centred or CHRIST centred. Are we like consumers and think what can I get out of this relationship. Or would we follow Jesus even when it's costly? The Disciples ran away when following Jesus became dangerous and costly.

Do we turn up to praise him when all is going well and the sun is shining? But when the storms come or life gets tough we blame God and our relationship gets sour.

This Holy week, let's really make time for Christ. Build it in to your plans.

Make Easter special, Christ centred and maybe we'll be able to say

What a difference a week makes.