



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

Palm Sunday, 28th March 2021

The paper-version Service

To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service set out below.



Opening Prayer: Almighty God, you are King, reigning gloriously, yet you show such grace in coming to us in Jesus. Thank you for your grace, kindness, and mercy. Thank you that you offer us forgiveness today. Help us receive this forgiveness and live in the certainty of your love. And release us in the worship you deserve and to proclaim you as King and God to our needy world. **Amen**

Song:

Hallelujah! sing to Jesus,
His the scepter, His the throne;
Hallelujah! His the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark, the songs of His redeemed
ones
Thunder like a mighty flood:
Jesus out of every nation
Hath redeemed us by His blood.

Hallelujah! not as orphans
Are we left in sorrow now;
Hallelujah! He is near us,
Faith believes, nor questions how.
Though the clouds from sight
received Him
When the forty days were o'er,
Shall our hearts forget His promise,
"I am with you evermore"?

Hallelujah! Bread of heaven,
Thou on earth our food, our stay;
Hallelujah! here the hungry
Come to Thee from day to day.
Advocate and Intercessor,
My Redeemer pleads for me,
On the throne of the Almighty
Now and to eternity.

Hallelujah! sing to Jesus,
His the scepter, His the throne;
Hallelujah! His the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark, the songs of His redeemed
ones
Thunder like a mighty flood:
Jesus out of every nation,
Hath redeemed us by His blood.

Read: John 12: 12-19

Hosanna! *A summary of the talk given by Jonathan Rooke.*

I wonder, what do you expect each day when you welcome Jesus into your life and do you leave any room for him to do anything new? Do your expectations limit him? When we welcome people we have expectations but we can be surprised by what we get. Can you think of times when you have been at a welcome, maybe a party or waiting at an airport or a railway station?

The Jews in this Palm Sunday story are welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem at the start of the Passover festival and they don't get what they expected.

The Jews had heard about Jesus and they were thrilled. Jesus had just done something amazing in Bethany at the house of Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. All the mourners are amazed by what he does and very quickly news spreads that Jesus has performed a miracle. They are wondering what he will do next.

So when the Jews hear that Jesus is coming into Jerusalem everyone comes out to welcome him. But why did they go? Who did they think he was? What were they

expecting him to do when he arrived in Jerusalem? How did they expect him to change their lives? We can ask ourselves the same questions.

For the Jews Jesus' arrival is a political act, not a spiritual one. They waved palm leaves because it was a political symbol of Jewish nationalism and liberation. Palm leaves reminded them of a previous successful Jewish revolt, and it was sign of celebrating victories over Gentile oppressors. Once inside the gates, they expect Jesus will be leading them in overthrowing the Romans. Their lives will change for the better. They knew just how Jesus was going to fit into their lives. Jesus would fit into their limited expectations.

What do we expect of Jesus? Can we make room for Jesus to grow deeper and be a bigger part of our lives? You see after Jesus was welcomed into the lives of the Jews, things started to change. We know Jesus died on the cross, he was buried and he rose again to new life. This changed all the expectations for the Jews who loved him and knew him. They had to re-examine who they thought Jesus was. The disciples could expect more if they opened up more of their lives to him.

Whatever we expect of Jesus, however we have welcomed him into our lives, we probably should expect more and make room in our lives for Jesus to surprise us. What might we expect from Jesus if we make room for him?

Here are a few things. We can expect him to ask us to keep looking forward as he himself did all through Holy Week. We can expect him to tell us not to be afraid, as he said when he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. We can expect him to be with us in any challenging situation in life for the long haul. He says 'I will always be with you.' He will not leave us. We can expect him to forgive us when we fall short. We can expect him to let us abide in him (to know him), as the branches abide in a vine as he says at the last supper. We can expect only good things from Jesus. Not easy, but good, purposeful, moving us in the right direction towards God.

So, this Palm Sunday, Can we welcome Jesus into our lives, let him challenge our expectations and make room for growth? We may have to give things up like the privileged young man. We may have to stop looking back and

plough forwards straight furrows. We may have to accept that God really is in this messy life for the long haul and he is holding us tight: "Even to your old age, I am he, even when you turn grey I will carry you I have made and I will carry and will save." It is written in Isaiah 46. We may have to find ways of forgiving others, or ourselves. We may act on God's promise that God really does love us and he delights in us as we are. We may have to more willingly give ourselves to others. We may have to...just relax sometimes and enjoy the life that God has given us. We may need to practice gratitude more. We may just have to trust God and smile more with God. We may have to rejoice more in the new things ahead because Jesus is Immanuel - he is with us through thick and thin.

Let's welcome Jesus into our lives this Palm Sunday whether it is for the first time perhaps, or for the fiftieth time and open up our expectations.

Prayer

Dear God we want to welcome Jesus in a new way and Expect new life and live in the grace and hope Jesus gives us, each new day.

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)

- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends.
- Pray for the Church.



Collect: Palm Sunday. Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.. **Amen.**



The 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.**

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, COGS, the communities around us and our whole nation. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV)

The Notices: We are still planning to return to (ticketed and socially distanced) services for Easter Sunday. Further information on our website or by ringing Howard.

If you know of others who would like to receive this, or you would rather not receive it; or if you find yourself isolated and not able to get neighbours, friends, or family to help, then ring Howard, 01420 563344.

0800 804 8044
DailyHOPE
A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers