

Palm Sunday: The Triumphal Entry..

It's a strange day. We see Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey's colt and the crowds cheering and waving palm leaves. And it sounds good. Happy.

But **we** know how this week ends. We know that many shouting 'Hosanna', 'save us!'. Will, in only 6 days, be shouting 'crucify.'

Paula Gooder's book about 'The Women of Holy Week' begins with the stories of Miriam and Sarah. Neither of which are actually in scripture!

This book has given us the opportunity to engage with Holy Week in a unique way. To imagine what it could have been like to accompany Jesus in His final week, or have fleeting encounters with Him in that week, like Miriam and Sarah.

Miriam, was one of the thousands of people approaching Jerusalem for the very important Festival of Passover. A week long holiday, celebrating the Birthday of Israel as a nation. Free from slavery in Egypt.

Picture it. Thousands of people swarming into the city.. There would have been lots of dust and the hot sun beating down on them making them sweaty! Probably was a bit whiffy!

The children would be running around enjoying the adventure and journey with their friends. I think of lots of jostling and shouting, laughter and chattering.

It must have been exhausting, exciting and wonderful to be en mass with your people. And they would have been singing Psalms..

(probably the Psalms of Ascent. There are 15 of them, and they are associated with the 15 steps of the Temple. They were sung by the exiles returning after Babylonian captivity and also at the three pilgrimage feasts)

It reminds me of my 11 holidays at New Wine, and the first evening service. Everyone tired and a bit fraught. There's lots to do. Unpack. Register the children into the clubs. Have supper and then go...Go to the main tent. From all the corners of the camp site, everyone walking or cycling to the first celebration.

It was a bit like coming home. Gods people, gathered together, all focused on praising and connecting with God.

And the worship.....It felt and sounded how I imagine heaven might be.

Singing with the Angels around the Throne.

Back to Palm Sunday

Many in the crowd would have heard of Jesus; may have seen him and heard him speak. And they probably hoped he would come to the Temple.

Bartimaeus had just been healed by Jesus. A blind man whose sight was restored, and he followed Jesus, shouting 'Jesus, Son of David'. Making it clear to all, that he knew Jesus was the Messiah.

Of course we all are aware that the people expected, and hoped for a conquering King that would save them from Roman rule.

They wanted rescuing from the oppression and evil.

But, Jesus came as prophesied by Zechariah 9v9

‘Behold, your king comes to you; He is (uncompromisingly) just and having salvation (triumphant and victorious), patient, meek, lowly, and riding on a donkey, upon a colt, the foal of a donkey’. (amplified translation.)

Jesus did come to save us. But not in the way expected.

It was clear to all, if they had really looked. He didn’t ride in on a white stallion but on the foal of a donkey.

A beast of burden, which worked and served all its life.

He arrived in the very way it was predicted.

Can you imagine seeing a grown man; A man who had worked hard as a carpenter, sitting on this small animal. No saddle; just someone’s old overcoat; wearing the dusty, dirty robes of peasant. And his feet were probably dragging on the ground.

As far as we know from the reports in scripture, he didn’t say a word. No rousing speech or shouting.

Quietly, slowly, riding a small colt, too small for a grown man, which must have looked a bit ridiculous.

But **He** looked ‘kingly and gentle, powerful and caring all rolled into one’. How steadfast love would look.

The Servant King on an animal of service

Whilst looking at this very familiar passage of scripture and reading commentaries, I realised that this colt was unbroken. Had never been ridden before.

Surely it would normally be bucking a rider off his back.?

And be startled and spooked by crowds of people. Especially shouting ones waving palm branches. It would have been frightened and try to run off.

BUT, it had Jesus riding him. Our Saviour who calmed the storm, fed thousands of people with a small packed lunch, healed the sick and raised the dead. The miracle maker.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem heroically and peacefully; even amidst the chaos of people and palms and shouting.

Jesus takes the wild, chaotic and transforms it into something manageable.

HE IS ABLE to take what may be seen as a lost cause or hopeless situation and turn it on its head.

That is so reassuring.

You may be experiencing a wild ride at the moment. You may feel about to fall off. And it’s scary.

Please pray with someone. We are told quite clearly to pray about anything and everything

Please do go to our prayer minister today if that is the case. It’s all in confidence.

Some final thoughts...

Am I authentic in my worship or just saying the words on the screen?

Am I seeking and seeing Jesus working in my life?

Or am I just going with the flow? As some in the crowd were.

Doing and saying the right things but not acknowledging His Kingship in my life?
Am I listening out to Him and hearing what He needs from me? Jesus NEEDED the colt.
Do I feel as if I am riding a bucking bronco? Only just clinging on?
Is my foundation crumbling?

Let's trust in the miracle maker.

We need to remember that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and He came to give us life and life to the full. But it is a life of humble service and love.

This is the beginning of Jesus' final week. After entering the City so calmly he then enters the Temple and the next day debates with the Sadducees and chief priests.
Miriam, our first lady, meets up with our second lady, Sarah, whose husband is a priest.
He witnesses the debate and is challenged and excited by Jesus' words.

Oh, that we would be the same.

Let's pray:-

King Jesus,

May we hear your gentle voice; may we go, be, do, what you **need** us to.

May our worship be genuine and honouring of You.

May You be our foundation.

When life is tumultuous and uncertain, may we know the peace of God that goes beyond understanding, trusting that His love is steadfast.

He knows our circumstances and is **ABLE** to hold us close through troubled times.

In His Glorious and Magnificent name,

Amen

Gillian C Robinson