

Ripon & Lower Dales

Worship at Home

2nd April 2023

Palm Sunday

Today is Palm Sunday, the day we remember how Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, with crowds shouting Hosanna to the Son of David – in other words declaring him Lord and King.

Call to Worship

Let us come before the Lord today, lifting our hearts in praise.
May we be ready to follow him with 'Hosanna!' on our lips and love for him in our hearts.

Hymn Jesus is Lord

1 Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,
for by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;
sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord!

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!
Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!*

2 Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal
in flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding —
yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free.

3 Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,
from death he rose; and all his foes shall own his name.
Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit to show by works of power that Jesus is Lord.

David John Mansell (b. 1936)

Prayers of Praise and Adoration

King of kings and Lord of lords!
As we think of the splendour of our heavenly king, the majesty of Jesus, let our spirits be lifted.
Lord, you are enthroned on high. You look down on us as we worship, whether we are in a church building, or worshipping at home.
You love us, as we are, wherever we are.
We love you, we adore and we praise you.

Jesus, we praise you that you travelled the road that led to your death, not with armies but gently, riding on a donkey.
We thank you that, wherever you call us to travel, into whatever situation, we too can go gently.
Surrounded by your love and your community, we can go out today in your name, singing Hosanna in the highest heaven, for you are our Lord and King. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance

The crowd honoured Jesus.
For the times we, as a crowd, don't honour you,
when we don't even want to be in the crowd:
forgive us, gentle Jesus.
Forgive us, we beseech you, O Lord.

For the times we don't mark Christian festivals the way we should.
When we don't recognise you as the Son of David,
when we go along with the crowd, perhaps not even knowing why:
forgive us, gentle Jesus.
Forgive us, we beseech you, O Lord.

For the times we aren't ready to do
what you ask,
when we don't want to share with
others,
when we try to go it alone:
forgive us, gentle Jesus.

**Forgive us, we beseech you, O
Lord. Amen**

Gracious God, you always know our
hearts,
even if sometimes we feel lost in our
wrongdoing,
lost in the crowd, you are always
there –
to pick us up and put us back on the
right track,
to teach us to improvise even when we
feel bogged down,
to bring new life and forgiveness in
your wings.
So we can truly rejoice in travelling
with you.

Amen

Hymn Make way, make way

1 Make way, make way, for Christ
the King
in splendour arrives ;
fling wide the gates and welcome him
into your lives.

*Make way (Make way), make way
(make way),
for the King of kings (for the King of
kings) ;
make way (make way), make way
(make way),
and let his Kingdom in.*

2 He comes the broken hearts to
heal,
the prisoners to free ;
the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
the blind shall see.

3 And those who mourn with heavy
hearts,
who weep and sigh,
with laughter, joy and royal crown
he'll beautify.

4 We call you now to worship him
as Lord of all,
to have no gods before him,
their thrones must fall !

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Bible Reading Matthew 21:1-11

21 As they approached Jerusalem and
came to Bethphage on the Mount of
Olives, Jesus sent two
disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the
village ahead of you, and at once you
will find a donkey tied there, with her
colt by her. Untie them and bring them
to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you,
say that the Lord needs them, and he
will send them right away."

⁴ This took place to fulfil what was
spoken through the prophet:

⁵ "Say to Daughter Zion,
'See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus
had instructed them. ⁷ They brought
the donkey and the colt and placed
their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit
on. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their
cloaks on the road, while others cut
branches from the trees and spread
them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that
went ahead of him and those that
followed shouted,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

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

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the
whole city was stirred and asked,
"Who is this?"

¹¹ The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

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Heavenly Father, help us to recognise Jesus as the one who comes in your name, as the one who blesses and saves us.

As we explore your Word today, may we offer true praise and adoration in our worship,

may we be open to learn more about your ways, and may we resolve to walk the road with Jesus every day.

Amen.

Reflection

The events of what we call Palm Sunday, were so important to the Gospel writers, each of them, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, include this occasion in their writings. They each have their own subtle differences - you may like to take time to compare the different texts later. But for today, our focus is on Matthew's Gospel and his version, and so we shall reflect upon what he is telling us about Jesus.

The reading begins as Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, along with many thousands of other pilgrims. It is the biggest festival for the Jewish people – Passover, the time to remember how their ancestors were rescued from slavery in Egypt. It is perhaps not surprising that it was at this time, Jesus chose to make his entry into the city, to fulfil his mission of being our rescuer.

And he definitely has chosen this time, he's planned it all in advance. He's arranged for a donkey to be left ready to collect – and soon we will also hear that he has booked an Upper Room for his friends to stay at. Good forward planning, when you think how busy Jerusalem will be at Passover.

Matthew, unlike the other Gospels, writes about a donkey and its colt, a foal. This is to highlight to his Jewish readers, that Jesus is fulfilling a prophecy by Zechariah (9:9), although I do wonder if he misread it. "See your king comes to you righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." That doesn't seem to indicate two animals – and how would you ride two at once! But it is interesting to note the donkey has foal. We sang at the start "Jesus is Lord of all creation". The other Gospels say the donkey hasn't been ridden before, so Jesus has two scared animals in his care. All that bustle and noise would have been quite frightening for them. So I picture Jesus gently reassuring them with a gentle word and gentle touch – taking care of God's creation. But these animals also represent purity, having never been used by humans they are, in the eyes of Mosaic Law, ready for sacrifice – or rather the one they carry is sacrificed in their place.

Jesus, though, is giving the people a very dramatic way to declare who he is. A conquering king would be expected to ride in on a magnificent war horse. And we expect King Charles III to ride to his coronation in a splendid carriage pulled by fine horses, but perhaps we shouldn't be too surprised if he suddenly announced "I'm going there on a donkey!" In ancient times in the East, a king riding a donkey meant he came in peace. The horse was a mount of war, the donkey was a mount of peace. Jesus is demonstrating he is a king of peace, coming to love, not condemn, coming to help, not to harm, coming in the strength of love and peace to serve the people, values our new king will want to uphold.

But it takes courage from Jesus to enter the city of Jerusalem to do this. The crowds may be cheering, many have travelled with him, others have heard of his miraculous healings and wonderful parables and teaching, but the authorities in the city are not at all welcoming, have already been looking at ways to remove him.

Jesus knows he has to show defiance and challenge the authorities, even though he knows what it will cost him personally in the end. Yet, he will not turn away from the challenge ahead, he can enjoy this moment of glory, as the crowds cheer and spread their cloaks and palm leaves on the ground before him, but he knows the road ahead will soon turn to blood – his blood, shed for those very people cheering him now, who will turn against him and shout “Crucify”. As we enter Holy Week, I hope you will take time to reflect on the journey Jesus made to the cross, beginning today with a cry of Hosanna, which means “Save us” – you, me and all mankind.

Reflect also on the challenges ahead of you, do you need courage? Christ can provide it, so let him be the king of your heart today. Amen.

Hymn Ride on, ride on in majesty!

- 1 Ride on, ride on in majesty !
Hark, all the tribes ‘Hosanna!’ cry ;
your humble beast pursues its road
with palms and scattered garments
strowed.
- 2 Ride on, ride on in majesty !
In lowly pomp ride on to die :
O Christ, your 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 !
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh ;
the Father, on his sapphire throne,
expects his own anointed Son.

5 Ride on, ride on in majesty !
In lowly pomp ride on to die ;
bow your meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, your power, and
reign.

Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868)

Prayers for Others

Lord Jesus,
we pray for all who give of themselves
sacrificially,
for those whose lives are dedicated to
serving others:
parents, carers, foster carers, doctors,
nurses...
those caring for children or elderly
relatives.

**Let us travel together and lighten
the load.**

We pray for those serving in war-torn
countries around the world:
medics, those who work in missions,
the media, NGOs and charities
who bring food, shelter and healing to
those in need,
sometimes putting their own lives on
the line.

**Let us travel together and lighten
the load.**

We pray for those in our communities
who need our unconditional love:
those hurting from broken
relationships, abuse, bullying,
domestic violence...
children and adults whose lives are
bereft of love and hope.

**Let us travel together and lighten
the load.**

We pray that we might be Easter
people,
laying down our lives to serve others,
bringing hope to hopeless situations –

the hope of the cross and resurrection.
**Let us travel together and lighten
the load. 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.
Save us from the time of trial and
deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the
glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Hymn 277 My song is love unknown

- 1 My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.
O who am I,
that for my sake
my Lord should take
frail flesh and die ?
- 2 He came from his blest throne,
salvation to bestow ;
but they made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know.
But O my Friend,
my Friend indeed,
who at my need
his life did spend !
- 3 Sometimes they strew his way,
and his sweet praises sing ;
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King.
Then 'Crucify !'
is all their breath,
and for his death
they thirst and cry.
- 4 Why, what has my Lord done ?
What makes this rage and spite ?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries !
Yet they at these
themselves displease,
and 'gainst him rise.

5 They rise, and needs will have
my dear Lord made away ;
a murderer they save,
the Prince of Life they slay.
Yet cheerful he
to suffering goes,
that he his foes
from thence might free.

6 In life no house, no home,
my Lord on earth might have ;
in death, no friendly tomb
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say ?
Heaven was his home ;
but mine the tomb
wherein he lay.

7 Here might I stay and sing,
no story so divine :
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine !
This is my Friend,
in whose sweet praise
I all my days
could gladly spend.

Samuel Crossman (c. 1624–1683)

Blessing

Go with us, good Lord, on our journey
to the cross and beyond.
Help us to pass on our enthusiasm to
others.

Keep us faithful to Jesus, our
saviour and friend.
Stir up our praise as we look forward
to Easter Day.

Amen

And the blessing of God, the Father,
the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you
now and always. **Amen.**

Kathy Lowrie