

## 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Morning Service

### Lent 6 – Palm Sunday – Trust and Obey

Rev Alan Combes

#### Lent Liturgy - Palm Cross / Palm Leaf

##### **Matthew 21: 1-2; 6 - 9**

*As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 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." The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 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!"*

Lord Jesus, the crowds shouted their hosannas; we too praise you because you are our King. Help us to share our faith and lead others to also acknowledge you as King. We take a moment to pray that we may have the courage and compassion to bear witness to who Jesus is to our friends, family and society. We pray that as the Church, we may be bold and loving in our stand for Christ in the UK and around the world, standing together to have an increased passion for mission beyond our walls and our nation. Lord Jesus, break the silence of your people. Cause us to be bold in proclaiming and demonstrating the joyful news that you are King, that all may come to know you. **Amen.**

#### Call to Worship

Rejoice - shout in triumph.

Our king is coming, victorious and righteous,

Christ is with us; we are enfolded in his steadfast love.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Christ is with us; his peace will strengthen us.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Christ is with us; let us offer our worship.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.**

#### StF 341 – All for Jesus

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| 1) All for Jesus-all for Jesus,<br>This our song shall ever be:<br>For we have no hope, nor Saviour,<br>If we have not hope in thee.                       | 3) All for Jesus - thou hast loved us;<br>All for Jesus-thou hast died;<br>All for Jesus-thou art with us;<br>All for Jesus crucified.      |
| 2) All for Jesus - thou wilt give us<br>Strength to serve thee, hour by hour;<br>None can move us from thy presence,<br>While we trust thy love and power. | 4) All for Jesus - all for Jesus -<br>This the church's song must be;<br>Till, at last, we all are gathered<br>One in love and one in thee. |

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## StF 263 – Hosanna

- 1) Hosanna, Hosanna,  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Hosanna, Hosanna,  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Lord, we lift up Your name,  
With hearts full of praise;  
Be exalted, O Lord, my God!  
Hosanna in the highest!
- 2) Glory, glory,  
Glory to the King of kings!  
Glory, glory,  
Glory to the King of kings!  
Lord, we lift up Your name,  
With hearts full of praise;  
Be exalted, O Lord, my God!  
Glory to the King of kings!

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## Introduction

We stand at the beginning of the most important week in Christian year. A unique opportunity for all of us to look again at our faith in the light of the passion of Christ, showing us the sacrificial love God. Today as we begin Holy Week, may our worship celebrates God's great love for us. It is the story of Jesus coming to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the culmination of his amazing preaching, teaching and healing ministry. We hear and see and join in the story of so many people who are thankful to him for their lives changed; their hope re awakened. And yet all too soon these events will turn as we are carried swiftly forward into the events of Holy Week. We will see Jesus' anger in the temple at the money lenders, his final meal with his disciples, the last supper, and his betrayal, arrest, abuse and execution. All these incredible moments shape our faith; they makes us as Christians who we are. So as we gather in God's presence, we remember that we are God's people and the building of the kingdom is in our hands through God's love and through the immeasurable amazing gift of life in Christ.

Let us hear again of the story of Palm Sunday...

## Reading: Mark 11:1-11

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

## Prayer of Confession

King of glory, Lord of life, we come before you joyfully proclaiming your majesty and might; your power is beyond description, your strength beyond our imagination.

King of glory, Lord of life, we come before you joyfully proclaiming your grace and compassion; your love embraces us tenderly, your peace enfolds us gracefully.

As we worship you, we are sorry, gracious God, for the times when we have praised you with our lips but our actions and our hearts have not fulfilled your word or way.

We are sorry that sometimes the words that we speak are not always consistent - that we may praise you today, and curse you tomorrow. So we are sorry that our Sunday joy and resolutions do not always last the whole week through. Forgive us, in the name of Jesus Christ.

May we know that forgiveness in our hearts today and may that enable us to be sincere, genuine and consistent in our praise and our discipleship as your love for us is eternal and ever faithful. **Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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 for ever. **Amen.**

### **StF 265 – Ride on, Ride on**

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.

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.

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.

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.

3) Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
The winged squadrons of the sky  
Look down with sad and wondering eyes  
To see the approaching sacrifice.

*Henry Hart Milman*

### **Sermon**

Palm Sunday is the culmination of Jesus' ministry; three years of preaching, teaching and healing. He has touched the lives of so many in practical, physical and spiritual ways. He has challenged the establishment time and again. He has set a new standard of being human expressing this both in the language of the law – 'a new commandment I give you' - AND through what he has done for people, showing them a new way to live by his own example, caring for those on the margins, protecting the oppressed, giving us all a new sense of what is important - the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven. Jesus' name and fame has spread far and wide. And to an oppressed people, who have suffered hundreds of years of pain, and waiting, he is the one, the one who has come to save them in their generation and time.

The excitement must have been palpable. The tension must have hung in the air in the days leading up to this day. Jesus and his followers had made their way up to Jerusalem. The rumours had gone round. People were gathering and waiting because they were sure he was going to show himself, His true self, to the Governor, the Romans and the world! And in the midst of all this – he asks two of his disciples to go into the local village to collect a humble donkey!

Jesus has a plan - Jesus knows the full story that we do not - and so he asks his disciples to do something very important; he asks them to TRUST and OBEY HIM. To obey by going and asking for the donkey, trusting that things will be OK. It seems such a small task....

My reflection today is one single thing. We live in a world of doubt and mistrust. No-one seems to take anyone at their word anymore. And Jesus asks us to Trust and Obey him.

Anyone who has ever dealt with double glazing knows it is a nightmare! There is no fixed price, they often try and squeeze you for as much as they can get, they offer discounts that must be taken up today or they're gone - you must make a decision NOW! Sometime ago now we were sorting out new windows for my father's house. We got two quotes which were vastly different, prepared badly, without attention to detail and with poor communication. We ended up going to a 'trusted trader', something we had never done before. We found a windows company with over 100 recommendations, who gave us a fixed price for the job which was good value, with no haggling and they did a great job! Amazing!

Lack of trust is often rooted in the fact that we do not know the people we are dealing with. We do not know their character or how they deal with people. We don't know their track record in the past. So I find myself wondering what it was like for those two disciples on that day. No explanation, not much detail from Jesus, just the request to go and collect a donkey.

What is different here in this encounter with Jesus? I guess the answer is that they knew Jesus. And that's true for us too – through Jesus we know God. The difference is that we know God. We know God's character of love and justice. We know how God deals with people in grace and kindness, with justice and mercy balanced and all rooted in the possibility of forgiveness and a second chance. All shown to us in the passion, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the living word. We know God's track record of eternal faithfulness. I can imagine the disciples saying to themselves as they went on their uncertain way: 'remember – since we have been following Jesus he has given sight to the blind, he healed people with leprosy and even raised someone from the dead. I think we can trust him...'

When Jesus appears to us on Palm Sunday morning and humbly invites us to proclaim his name, to accept his rule, to follow his way I remind myself that he is NOT calling us to blind trust. Jesus is saying, 'you KNOW me, you know who I am – God's son, your shepherd and friend. You know what I have done – dying on the cross and risen again – victorious. You know who I am and where I am now.' May our response on this day not only reflect all those who praised his name 2,000 years ago but may we – knowing God in the risen Lord - succeed where those of the gospel story failed. Those whose hearts and minds and voices, in just a few days turned from Hosanna to Crucify!! May we succeed in Trusting and Obeying God and so proclaim Hosanna today and always. Amen

### **StF 317 – At the name of Jesus**

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| 1) At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,<br>Every tongue confess him King of Glory now.<br>'Tis the Father's pleasure we should<br>call him Lord,<br>Who from the beginning was the mighty Word.           | 4) In your hearts enthrone him; there let<br>him subdue<br>All that is not holy, all that is not true;<br>Crown him as your captain in temptation's hour:<br>Let his will enfold you in its light and power. |
| 2) Humbled for a season, to receive a name<br>From the lips of sinners unto whom he came,<br>Faithfully he bore it, spotless to the last,<br>Brought it back victorious<br>when from death he passed:           | 5) For this same Lord Jesus shall return again,<br>With his Father's glory, with his angel train;<br>All the wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,<br>And our hearts confess him King of Glory now.          |
| 3) Bore it up triumphant, with its human light,<br>Through all ranks of creatures to the central height,<br>To the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast;<br>Filled it with the glory of that perfect rest. |  |

*Caroline Maria Noel*

## Thanksgiving and Intercessions

For times of celebration and joy, we thank you Lord, for you are good and your love endures for ever.  
For Christ's presence when we need him most, we thank you Lord, for you are good and your love endures for ever.

For your presence with us, yesterday, today and always, we thank you Lord, for you are good and your love endures for ever.

On this special day of rejoicing, we pause to remember those who will find it difficult to rejoice today...  
For all those who today will be hungry; for those who rely on food banks; for those whose harvest has failed; for those whose family members are too ill to work  
Gracious God, **mercifully hear us.**

For all the places in the world where there is war, where people have to leave their homes because of violence; for families and friends separated by the trauma of conflict and migration, that they may soon be reunited  
Gracious God, **mercifully hear us.**

For all the different communities within the Church throughout the world; that they may have vision to serve in imaginative ways offering compassion and hope to those to whom they relate  
Gracious God, **mercifully hear us.**

For us; for those we love easily and those who challenge us; that we may be strengthened and supported  
Gracious God, **mercifully hear us. Amen.**

## StF 346 – Christ is the world's light

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| 1) Christ is the world's Light, Christ and none other;<br>Born in our darkness, he became our Brother.<br>If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:<br>Glory to God on high. | 3) Christ is the world's Life, Christ and none other;<br>Sold once for silver, murdered here,<br>our Brother -<br>He, who redeems us, reigns with God the Father.<br>Glory to God on high. |
| 2) Christ is the world's Peace, Christ and<br>none other;<br>No one can serve him and despise another.<br>Who else unites us, one in God the Father?<br>Glory to God on high.    | 4) Give God the glory, God and none other;<br>Give God the glory, Spirit, Son, and Father;<br>Give God the glory, God with us my brother:<br>Glory to God on high.                         |

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## Blessing

Go and walk the Jesus way.  
Go with him in triumph; go with him in suffering.  
Go with your cross as he goes with his.  
Go knowing his blessing and his peace. **Amen.**