

Worship for Palm Sunday - 28th March 2021

from Jeanne Moore

Good morning to you all. I am pleased to be writing the Reflection for Palm Sunday I hope you are all keeping well. You are in my thoughts and prayers every day. 'This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it' .

Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel,
who alone does marvellous deeds.
Praise be to His glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with His glory.
Amen and amen. Ps 72 : 18 – 19

Suggested hymn : Faithful One so unchanging

FAITHFUL ONE, so unchanging,
Ageless One, You're my Rock of peace.
Lord of all, I depend on You,
I call out to You again and again.
I call out to You again and again.
You are my rock in times of trouble.
You lift me up when I fall down.
All through the storm Your love is the anchor,
My hope is in You alone

Reading: Ps 118 : 1, 5-8, 25-29

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.
When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD;
he brought me into a spacious place.
The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?
The LORD is with me; he is my helper.
I look in triumph on my enemies.
It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in humans.
LORD, save us!
LORD, grant us success!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.¹
The LORD is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
up to the horns of the altar.
You are my God, and I will praise you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

A word on Psalm 118

A proclamation of victory over the enemy runs right through this Psalm. It is truly a resurrection Psalm. It bids everyone to give praises for God's power and to know that the best thing we can do is to put our trust in Him. Not in humans (v8) building our lives on the

approval of others. Nor on princes(v9) making an idol out of power, wanting too much.

Only God is certain to bring triumph out of disaster. Whatever we face, however heavy and painful is our own personal cross, God will bring us through it. (v29) Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. Amen.

A prayer.

Faithful God, Thank you that there is no situation too hard for you to resolve,
no pain too acute for you to heal,
no depths too deep for you to lift us from
and no cry that ever goes unnoticed.

Thank you that you are a God of resurrection and new life.

You are our refuge and strength;
We will keep on praising you. Amen.

A confession:

Please make this prayer your own, reading carefully and thoughtfully:

"Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10)

Bible reading: Mark 11 : 1 – 11

11 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ²saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"

⁴They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" ⁶They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

"Hosanna!

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

¹⁰"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹¹Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Reflection

So Jesus rides to Jerusalem. Usually the final part of any pilgrimage was made on foot, but Jesus chose to ride on a borrowed colt. The crowd shouting 'Hosanna', throwing down palm leaves and cloaks for Jesus to ride over. This is red carpet treatment because here comes their king! This is the Messiah who is going to get rid of the oppressive Roman rule they are living under. Or so they thought. But of course Jesus wasn't coming as a Nationalist Messiah on horseback. He was coming as the Prince of Peace on a donkey. In those days in the Near East donkeys were regularly ridden by royalty in peacetime. Horses were reserved for battles. Jesus was coming in peace not war. This reign would be in peoples hearts.

In verses 2 and 3 Jesus asks the disciples to bring Him a certain colt. Mark quotes Jesus as saying 'The Lord needs it and will return it immediately' which is what He did. Jesus rode into Jerusalem (v11) looked around and left, no doubt to return the colt.

Jesus released the colt and returned it, let it go. What about us? The season of Lent has been a time for us to reflect, to look within ourselves. What we have been holding on to, grudges, resentment, disappointment, guilt. Baggage we have been carrying around, weighing us down. We need to let go of all the negative things, release it so that we can focus on the parts of our lives that we need to return to, like hope, truth, mercy and forgiveness. That is what God wants us to return to.

Jesus began Holy Week by riding into Jerusalem on a colt, looking around, leaving and returning the colt. Now is the time for us to do the same. To return and release everything to God, so we will be ready for the new life to come.

Meditation

Sometimes I feel like a donkey, Lord,
Overburdened. Not very bright. Taken for granted.
There's always room on my back for one more
burden. So people think..it's as if there is a carrot
being dangled in front of me, to encourage me to do
more, to plod on.
When I think of it, that's the way I can treat people.
Unthinking. Unfeeling. Just assuming they are there.
There are limits though. A donkey can only do so
much. There came a time Lord, just days after that
donkey ride,
When it wasn't the donkey taking the strain.
It was you, carrying the weight. On the cross.
Taking the burden of a world gone wrong.
Taking responsibility for all its mistakes –
Shall we stop treading delicately and call it sin
Lord,
Our sin, my sin.
Carrying it all, carrying me.
You needed a donkey just for a time, Lord.
I need you always.

A Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, Remind us through this day
that you are King, but not of this world;
that you rule, but not through force;
that you invite respect, but do not demand it;
that you are the Lord of Lords, yet the servant of all.
Teach us the way of humility and the path of love,
so that we can go on serving you come what may,
day by day, now and always. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (traditional version):

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.

Hymn: How great thou art (O Lord my God)

O LORD MY GOD! when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;

And when I think that God His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die—I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home—what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

The blessing: Now may the blessing of Almighty
God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be
with and remain with us always. **Amen.**