

“Worship at home” for Palm Sunday - 5th April 2020

Prepared by Rev. Brian Kennard

Opening sentence:

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good:
His love endures for ever.” (Psalm 118:1)

A prayer:

May the word get around, O God,
that you are God.
That you disrupt our ways,
challenge our being,
cause confusion on our presumptions,
confront our prejudices
and for this we praise you.
May the word get around, O God,
that you are God.
Not some quiet deity in some distant past
but the life-force of justice,
the spirit of wisdom,
the word that shouts in the streets
that love has been set free
to cause disquiet in the corridors of power
and for this we praise you.
May the word get around, O God,
that you are God.
Found in the middle of the arguments for truth
in the debates about power,
in the disputes for peace,
ready to build the kingdom
right where the world wants to destroy itself
and for this we praise you.
May the word get around, O God,
that you are God
and we praise you.
Amen.

The Collect (prayer) for the day:

Almighty and everlasting God,
Who in your tender love towards mankind
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross,
that all mankind should follow
the example of his great humility:
grant that we may both follow the example of his
passion
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Hymn suggestion: *Ride on, Ride on in majesty*
(*Singing the Faith* No. 265)

Link to YouTube video for the hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAh1lzSQ3P4>

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 winged 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.

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!"

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

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

Brian's Meditation:

"See, your king comes to you." (Verse 5)

What does it mean to claim that Jesus is King?

As the story develops, it becomes abundantly clear that Jesus wasn't the kind of King the crowds desired. Rather than overthrow Roman rule, he cleanses the Temple instead. Which leads me to think: What kind of King is Jesus to me? The earliest Christian creed, "**Jesus is Lord**", conveys much the same meaning. Certainly, He is (as Graham Kendrick penned) *the Servant King* and certainly "*The King of love my shepherd is*". But he is not a sort of Aladdin's Genie who appears to fulfil my desires, is he? In the story of the wise and foolish builders, known to anyone who has attended Sunday school, Jesus asks us the pointed question, "Why do you call me Lord. Lord, and not do what I say?"

The reality is that Jesus *is* a warrior-king. He has an army. He employs weapons. He leads us into conflict. The *difference* between earthly rulers like King David and Jesus is the *kind* of personnel, weapons and conflicts Jesus uses. Instead of bloodthirsty fighters, Jesus recruits "anyone who will come to me". Instead of swords, bombs, bullets or nuclear devices, **he employs the weapons of love, prayer, thankfulness, self-sacrifice**. And the enemy is never other people, however different from ourselves, but the "principalities and powers" (a phrase that needs a lot of unpacking but includes the way things are organised without reference to God's Word and ways).

Is Jesus the King we want? He is absolutely the King we all need.

Link to our YouTube Channel (where you can find our video for today, including Brian's reflection):
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR_MjDI7G44CcMqDXaogfIA

Prayer time:

In your own words, remember before God...

- Those in authority in this country and around the world grappling with the present crisis and the many other difficult problems humanity faces...
- All those "on the front line" whether NHS staff, transport workers, shop workers, the emergency services...
- Those most personally affected by the Covid-19 outbreak: the bereaved, those seriously ill, those who have already lost their jobs...
- The Church of Jesus Christ as together we seek to witness to the love and care of God in word and action...
- And pray for yourself and your family.
- Remember, too, *thankfulness!*

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn suggestion: *Make Way, Make Way...*
(Singing the Faith No. 264)

Link to YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tK6XuYhL7JI>

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...
for the King of kings...
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 © 1986 Thankyou Music.

Blessing:

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