

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

28 March 2021 - Palm Sunday

Dear Friends,

For those people who like peace and quiet in their worship, and nothing that will rattle too many feathers, the original events that we commemorate on Palm Sunday would have been really noisy. There were crowds jostling with one another to get into Jerusalem and into the Temple in the days of preparation before the great Festival of Passover began. In fact coming to Jerusalem at any festival time would have been exciting and full of sights and sounds you wouldn't experienced at home. We also get the impression that worshipping God, from a pilgrim worshipper's perspective, would have been chaotic and full of the unexpected. Hard work. Challenging in fact. Even domestic Synagogue worship was full of debate and argument, grappling with the Word of God read from the regular portions of the scrolls. It was hardly peaceful! Worship was certainly not supposed to be gentle, or soothing, or comfortable in the way some people have grown to expect today. Worship was supposed to be more like a trip to the gym, where to return home without a full physical, mental and spiritual shakeup was to be shortchanged. And yet, again like today, there was much complacency and false expectation.

So imagine the surprise and intrigue when a man appears riding on the back of a donkey, along a route usually processed on foot (or for the powerful and rich on horseback or hand-carried cart). But not a donkey, which would normally carry goods or materials. To be on the back of a

donkey was not just humbling but humiliating. And yet at the same time the crowds were shouting out 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven', even as they spread their cloaks and fresh cut branches on the roadway ahead of the lowly cortege. This was revolutionary, and far from the armchair storybook accounts which we have become far too familiar. 'Who is this?', enquired the city's growing population. 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee', replied the boisterous retinue.

Whenever we read the Gospel accounts, and especially about the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, we should ask the same question. Who is this? Not just, 'who do I believe this to be?' or 'who is this to me?' but actually 'who is this?' Yes our faith is personal, and we all need to answer that question for ourselves, but the identity of Jesus is not a matter of opinion or private conclusion. The identity of Jesus is settled by God himself and the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, through which God reveals his Son to us. It is too easy to believe things about Jesus that just aren't true. The 'triumphal' entry into Jerusalem is one of those moments when we are encouraged to think again and in prayerful reading, discussion and reflection allow God to respond.

If our hearts are truly open to God then we can be sure that we will be surprised and challenged this Easter. If we are not prepared to learn and change, then ours is not a living faith but a lifeless religion.

Our Sunday worship service is just one small part of the spiritual life of Ryde Baptist Church. We are still not all able to safely gather in our building, so Zoom is the securest way for most people to meet at this time. It is not the same, but it fulfils an important purpose for the duration. Our Zoom Sunday Service is at 10.30am today. Services take a variety of forms and contents, and on the second Sunday of the month usually includes communion. On the fourth Sunday at 7pm we join with other Ryde churches. Our main weekly prayer meeting takes place on Monday evenings from 7pm, which is a really powerful and meaningful time in our life together. If you want to spend time praying with brothers and sisters in fellowship, this is the place to come. Regular Home Groups and other Courses - such as 'The Prayer Course' that we have been running during Lent - are very important for growing in discipleship and fellowship together. Of course, at the moment all these things take place using Zoom. The Zoom links will be sent to those who have signed up to receive them. If you'd like us to send you the links, please let us know. If you are reading this sheet on your computer or device you can click on the the readings and songs. There is more information on our website at <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

BIBLE READINGS

[Psalm 8:1-9](#)

[Zechariah 9:9-13](#)

[Matthew 21:1-11](#)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey. [Zechariah 9:9]

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 21:1-11 [NIVUK]

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. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.'

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

'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."'

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!'

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

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

SONGS

[Beautiful One](#)

[How Great Is Our God](#)

PRAYER

Jesus, King of the universe,
ride on in humble majesty:

Lord, this Palm Sunday may I recognise in
you the Lord who comes to his world, and
join with full heart in the people's
'hosanna'.

Ride on, through conflict and debate.
ride on through sweaty prayer and be-
trayal of friends:

Lord, this Palm Sunday forgive me my
evasion of truth, my carelessness of your
honour; my weakness which leaves me
sleeping even while in others you suffer
and are anguished; my cowardice that
does not risk the consequences of pub-
licly acknowledging you as Lord.

Ride on to the empty tomb of your rising
in triumph,
Ride on to raise up your Church, a new
body for your service;
Ride on, King Jesus, to renew the whole
earth in your image,
in compassion come to help us.

[Source unknown, India]

Ride on, ride on in majesty
as all the crowds 'Hosanna!' cry:
through waving branches slowly ride,
O Saviour, to be crucified.

Ride on, ride on in majesty,
in lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ, your triumph now begin
with captured death, and conquered sin!

[H H Milman/Jubilate Hymns]

Let the mountains and all the hills
Break out into great rejoicing at the
mercy of God,
And let the trees of the forest clap their
hands.

Give praise to Christ, all nations,
Magnify him, all peoples, crying:
Glory to thy power, O Lord.

Seated in heaven upon thy throne
And on earth upon a foal, O Christ our
God,
Thou hast accepted the praise of the an-
gels
And the songs of the children who cried
out to thee:
Blessed art thou that comest to call back
Adam.

[Source unknown, Eastern Orthodox]

SONG

Come As You Are

We are grateful to Nigel Pidgeon who has
prepared the following notes and will lead
us in our thoughts and reflections today:

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

God rules through the weak and power-
less.

Today's Psalm expands the revolutionary
idea of how God expects His power to be
revealed - of how His glory is to be shown
in the world.

The background here is in Psalms 1-2; God
promises to raise up a Messiah - an all
powerful anointed King, a descendant of
David, who will confront Evil and the
Powers of the Earth.

Then in Psalms 3-7 [by David], written in
times of great weakness and vulnerability
[e.g. David running away from his son, Ab-
salom , who had sworn to kill his father].
David expresses his powerlessness and
cries out for rescue.

And afterwards, in Psalms 9-14 we see
God's people being poor, afflicted and

powerless - crying out for rescue.

Psalms 8 is completely different. It has the same verse as introduction and finale [technical name = *inclusio*] to emphasise the central meaning of the Psalm.

And this 'sandwiched' Psalm details how God will use weak and feeble humans [like David] to be his children, and exhibit his Glory in all the Earth.

So verse 2 - God has used 'babes and nursing infants' [NKJV] to show His power and silence His enemies; children so young that they are without words - babblers. God is so powerful that he can use the least powerful instruments for His purposes.

And verses 3-8 compare the majesty of the creation of the Universe [so much more vast and complicated than iron-age Man could ever have dreamed] with the position of human beings. We are after all created from mud.

Yet God made us somehow to be something like Himself- and elevated us to share in His power and Glory.

It's obvious that God chooses to use the weak and powerless as his witnesses.

He wants us to praise Him as if we were pre-speech babies; this means at least that he doesn't necessarily expect any of His children to use long words in their prayers or singing!

Psalms 8 is connected to Psalms 1-7 for us as we see God's Messiah setting His example during His earthly years.

On Palm Sunday, we can look to the apostle Matthew in chapter 21 to see God's anointed King showing His power and authority by riding on a donkey; and being hailed by a large crowd [vs 8] of or-

dinary Judean folk, a crowd which would have contained lots of children and babies.

And in Chapter 18, Matthew records Jesus sitting a little child on His knee and saying to His disciples 'In very truth, unless you become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven'.

Paul joins in with this theme in his 'when I am weak, then I am strong' verses.

Of course we can't wind back time to become physically small again - Jesus wants us to depend on our heavenly Father as spiritual little children. This is how we can display His majesty in our time and place.

How relieved and thankful we are, God's children, that we don't have to reach a certain standard or level before we can be used by Him and become His witnesses! And how grateful that He uses us to rule over His creation, now and in eternity.

So this week, in our prayer and worship times, let's be brave enough to confess again our weaknesses and powerlessness before God, so He can use even more in His service.

SONG

[Lord Reign In Me](#)

BLESSING

'Hosanna to the Son of David!'

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

'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and always. Amen.

<https://rydebaptist.xy>