

BECKENHAM METHODIST CHURCH

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Watch on YouTube: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#)

Palm Sunday is significant because it marks the beginning of Holy Week, that very important day when Jesus began His journey toward the cross. Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem! The people cut palm branches and waved them in the air, then laid them out on the ground before Him as He rode into the city. The palm branch is known to represent goodness and victory, symbolic of the final victory He would soon fulfil over sin and death. For our worship today, I thought since the past week has been so dark and glum with the news dominated mainly by effects of Corvid 19, let us make this service a service of triumphant celebration! I would encourage us, from the onset, to think of at least one positive/important thing in your life right now. When you have done so, hold on to that which you have identified and together we will thank God and celebrate it during today's worship.

May I also ask that prior to our service please grab yourselves a branch of any tree from your garden or anything that can represent palm leaves if you have palm leaves, that would be fabulous. We will sing the first two songs as praise and worship.

GATHERING

So, they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him crying out, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'

We sense both the joy of at the Messiah being acclaimed

And the heaviness of his suffering which follows

Jesus' mission is drawing into fulfilment

We too, spread our palm leaves and coats on the road

Expressing our thankfulness for all you have done for us

And the amazing extent of your love.

We join with crowd shouts, "Hosanna!" **Amen**

SONG (*let us wave our 'palm' branches in the air as we sing, you can also play any instruments that you might have at home, you can even use plates, spoons, pots anything, dance along if you feel like it – it's triumphant entry into the Holy Week!*)

We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching in light of God!

We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching in the light of God!

We are marching – marching x2

We are marching in the light of God

We are marching – marching x2

We are marching in the light of God!

We are living in the love of God x4

We are living – living x2

We are living in the love of God

We are living – living x2

We are living in the love of God!

We are moving in the love of God x4

We are moving – moving x2

We are moving in the love of God

We are moving – moving x2

We are moving in the love of God!

OPENING PRAYER

Loving and gracious Lord, we come to you on this special day of your triumphant entry into Jerusalem, once more, reminded of your mercy and love for us. Help us O Lord to keep moving in your light and love in spite of the challenges we are facing at the moment. In the midst of these, our darkest days, we come to you our Lord, singing our Hosannas as we are reminded once more, of the many blessings that we have in you and through you, and for that, we are thankful.

We trust that through your grace, we will attain that which you have install for us.

And we can surely say together with Paul:

We do not claim that we have already succeeded or have already become perfect. But, through this journey, we keep striving to win the prize for which Christ Jesus has already won for us. We do our best to reach what is ahead. So, we run straight toward the goal, in order to win the prize, which is God's call through Christ Jesus.

In the midst of our challenging times, we acknowledge and give thanks for the many blessings we have: in our homes, our community and as a nation.

We give thanks for those areas of our lives we at times take for granted; like the company of our friends, like the freedom of going out for social events, like free travel. *(let us pause and bring back to our thoughts that positive thing you are grateful for).*

On this day, Jesus entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. As we worship this morning, help us, O Lord to spread before you, that which is valuable and important to us. We spread before, our health-care professionals, our police force, our political leaders and all those who work in essential services as well as all those in decision making positions. Lord grant them wisdom from on-high. *(let us pause again and bring back to our thoughts that positive thing you are grateful for).*

Let these branches we are flying, be for us, signs of Jesus' victory.

Because he overcame, we shall overcome one day!

Grant that, we who bear the palm leaves in His name, may ever hail Jesus Christ as our King, and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer *(Sung by Andrea Pacelli) Please do sing along if you like or quietly reflectively listen).*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEplqV0scyo>

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING – To be Read by Loopy Church.
(adapted from Helen Steiner's Poem: So Many Reasons to love the Lord)

Even when life seems to fall apart

We can trust in the infinite presence of God

We have reasons to thank you Lord,

we that you help us to see you when life's challenges cast their shadows.

Thank you, for the little things that come unexpectedly
To brighten up a dreary day
Thank you, God, for sending a happy thought my way
To blot out my depression on a disappointing day
Thank you, God, for brushing the dark clouds from my mind
And leaving only sunshine and joy of heart behind
Oh God, the list is endless for the things to thank you for
But many times, I take them all for granted
And, unconsciously I ignore that:
Everything I think or do, each movement that I make
Each measured, rhythmic heartbeat, each breath of life I take
Is something you have given me
Thank you God for everything – big and small
Help us to remember to give you thanks in each of our prayers and
To make each day, a day of thanksgiving. **Amen.**

BIBLE READING: *Mathew 21: 1-11*

SERMON

THEME:

**WHEN A MAN KNOWS THE END IS NEAR – ONLY THE
IMPORTANT SURFACES**

When I was growing up there was a popular saying that said: When a man knows the end is near, only the important surfaces. Meaning, once an individual learns of his/her impending death, they would usually prefer to concentrate only on the most significant aspects of their life – trivial issues are bypassed. The unnecessary is overlooked and that which is vital remains.

It seems to be the same in the last week of Jesus. He knew the end was near. He knew the finality of Friday. As a result, the critical was filtered from the casual. Deliberate deeds done. Each step calculated. Every act premeditated. Knowing he had just one week with the disciples.

Let us, on this reflection follow Jesus on his final journey, so that we may learn how to make our own journeys. Let us, feel his passion as he make the triumphant entry into Jerusalem and learn how he was hammering home those significant aspects of his ministry.

When a man knows the end is near, only the important surfaces.

The question is: For Jesus, what was important? From our bible reading of today, what I picked up was that He wanted, firstly, **people to know who He** was and to profess it with their own mouth. Prior to this day, prior to Palm Sunday, Jesus had refused to allow any public acknowledgment of Him being the Messiah. On many occasions he had command people not to tell anyone after he had done something significant for them (Matt 8: 3-4; Matt 9: 29-30; Matthew 12: 15-16; Matt 16: 20; Matt 17: 9; Lk 9: 21; Mk 5: 42-43; Mk 7: 35-36; Mk 8: 30; Mak 9: 9). But on this occasion, he let the large crowd applaud Him, even spreading the road with their garments and palm branches. They acknowledged Him as the son of David as they sung:– “Hosanna to the son of David” It seems then, for Jesus, this was the opportune time for the popular acclamation - a public acceptance of Him as the long awaited Messiah.

Following this acclamation, Jesus knew that he stood in sharp contrast with popular expectations of a messiah. So, it seems, He intended his entry into Jerusalem to give a clear declaration in regards to his messiahship. To achieve this point - Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. It is a dramatic statement, that is meant to send a clear message about what kind of a saviour he was. But, they just didn't get it, they couldn't see what Jesus wanted them to see – that, rather than a mighty warrior king, he is the kind of king who brings about peace. Isn't typical human nature, that at times we just don't get it even when the truth is staring in our faces. We share in the predicament of the people gathered that day long ago, because we are those people, too. Together with them, we still shout, "Hosanna!" 'Lord save us'.

This perhaps takes us to the next point that I seem to find striking. Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey! What a choice of an animal!! A donkey is generally known for being unruly and stubborn, and this one in particular:

- 1) It has never been broken (Mk11:2) ; so it was never tried and tested for purpose Jesus intended
- 2) it was tied (Matt 21:2) – therefore had no freedom;
- 3) it lived in a very rough village (Bethphage Mtt21:1).

But, despite the donkey's rough life style and its stubborn nature, Jesus managed to sit on it, and it was quiet, responsive, and obedient, and carried Jesus through the streets of the city (Ray Stedman on Mark 11). All of these things remind us of our own condition when Jesus

found us: unruly, stubborn and so strongly tied to our own traditions. And, on Palm Sunday, Jesus chose to requisition us for his purpose. Because **when a man knows the end is near – he chooses to emphasis on that which is important - In this case, it was for Jesus to claim His own, for himself.** Because he came so that we might have life, he came to set the prisoners free, he came to stand with those who are tied in the margins of our communities – and this lesson he had to hit home using whatever means he can – even a donkey!

When the Bible says that God loves the world, so that he sends us Jesus - it is giving us this new and challenging picture of love as Paul explains very well in 1Corinthians 13: 4-6 – Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and **endures all things. Love never ends.** On Palm Sunday, then, Jesus is sharing that, God’s love for us is not sentimental. Triumphal Entry seemed like a grand celebration, but underneath, seeds of the crucifixion were lying among the palms. **God’s love is not designed to keep us safe or make us feel good.** God loves us enough to **want us to be challenged and stretched into the biggest and best people we are capable of being.** On Palm Sunday, God dares us to join Jesus on this loving path. **Would you journey with Christ this Holy Week?**

Have a blessed Palm Sunday everyone!

Resources Used

- 1) Charles Andrew Coates – An Outline of Luke’s Gospel – 2019
- 2) Ray Stedman on Mark 11
- 3) J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton – The Fourfold Gospel

HYMN *Stand Up Stand For Jesus*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGf2fTla0zo>

Stand up stand up for Jesus, as soldiers of the cross
Lift up his royal banner, it must not suffer loss,
From victory on to victory, his army he shall lead
Till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed

Stand up stand up for Jesus, the trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict in this his glorious day!
All Christians true now serve him, against unnumbered foes
Let courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose

Stand up stand up for Jesus, stand in his strength alone
The arm of flesh will fail you, you dare not trust your own
Put on the gospel armour, each piece put on with prayer
Where duty calls, or danger, be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be long:
This day the noise of battle, the next the triumph song.
To him that is victorious, a crown of life shall be;
He with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.

CLOSING PRAYER

Christ’s triumphant entry is our own.
As we journey into the holy week
Let us keep our eyes on Jesus

He will show us where to from here.
As for today, keep singing hosannas all day long.
Hosanna! (*waving your palms leaf*)