

Salford Methodist Circuit



6th Sunday in Lent - Palm Sunday - 28th March 2021

Jayne Allen & Rev Kim Ratcliffe

Good morning everybody and welcome to our Palm Sunday worship this morning led by Rev Kim Ratcliffe and Jayne Allen.

The people cheered and shouted words of praise and shouts of hosanna as Jesus rode on a donkey into Jerusalem.

Let's celebrate this by singing our first hymn:

Hymn: Make Way, Make Way

*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), make way (make way),
for the King of kings (for the King of kings);
make way (make way), make way (make way),
and let his Kingdom in.*

*He comes the broken hearts to heal,
the prisoners to free;
the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
the blind shall see.
Make way...*

*And those who mourn with heavy hearts,
who weep and sigh,
with laughter, joy and royal crown
he'll beautify.
Make way...*

*We call you now to worship him
as Lord of all,
to have no gods before him,
their thrones must fall!
Make way...*

Wow, what a brilliant hymn.

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Today is the start of Holy Week where we think about Jesus' poor but joyous entrance into Jerusalem and the last few days with his disciples and the events of the next few days leading up to Good Friday and his death on the cross.

As we reflect on Jesus now we turn him in prayer.

Dear Lord,

The gates of heaven are opened wide, waiting for your son as he makes his journey towards the cross.

We celebrate this very simple man, born to be a king for all, but who still rode on the back of a donkey into Jerusalem,

We bring the best of what and who we are to you Lord Jesus,

We try hard to lay down our lives in service to you, Lord, as you laid down your life for us, Lord Jesus.

You've shown us such love, pure, and freely given for all mankind.

Amen.

Father God we adore you, we thank you for your precious gift to us.

Holy Spirit we ask you to guide and inspire us,

Praise be to you Father, for blessing us all so bountifully,

We thank you for the one who had nothing

Who rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey,

Praise be to you, Jesus, for giving of yourself so richly,

As we enter the gates of Holy Week

May we embrace the celebration with all we have.

Amen.

Bible Reading: Mark 11 : 1 - 11

As they approached Jerusalem, near the towns of Bethphage and Bethany, they came to the mount of olives. Jesus sent two of his disciples on ahead with these instructions: "Go to the village there ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a colt tied up that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. And if someone asks you why you are doing that, tell him that the master needs it and will send it back at once." So, they went and found a colt out in the street, tied to the door of a house. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders asked them, "What are you doing, untying that colt?"

They answered just as Jesus had told them, and the men let them go. They brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks over the animal, and Jesus got on. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches in the fields and spread them on the roads, the people who were in front and those who followed behind began to shout, "Praise God! God bless him who comes in the name of the lord! God bless the coming kingdom of king David, our father! praise God!"

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Jesus entered Jerusalem, went into the temple, looked round at everything. But since it was already late in the day, he went out to Bethany with the twelve disciples.

The Rev Kim Ratcliffe will be reflecting on today's reading after our second hymn this morning, which is 'Ride on, Ride on in majesty!'

Hymn: Ride On, Ride On In Majesty

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark, all the tribes 'Hosanna!' cry;
your humble beast pursues its road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

*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.*

*Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The winged squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.*

*Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh;
the Father, on his sapphire throne,
expects his own anointed Son.*

*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.*

Palm leaves being waved from side to side, backwards and forwards, up and down. Their Saviour, their King, riding on the donkey, "Hosanna in the highest!" Prepare ye the way for our Lord! The Messiah was finally in their midst, the expectation was something else, the sheer joy at last was being realised.

Jesus Christ, Superstar. He may well have been like a breath of fresh air on that Palm Sunday morning as he passed through the streets in front of the large crowds that had gathered to see him, maybe some had hoped that they would physically meet him, have conversation with him. Can you imagine that?!

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But these were 'ordinary' people and I am sure that if His disciples didn't stop them getting 'that' close to Him then the powers that be would have.

Have you ever been in the presence of someone who you absolutely adored from afar? Did you have the opportunity to meet them face to face? If so, can you remember what words you spoke to them? Did they break the ice first?

I have a picture in my office, I can see a pair of legs in a pair of jeans in the background. I don't know what sex the person in the jeans is. When you initially look at the picture you may not necessarily see that detail. You don't have to look at the background, as your eyes are naturally drawn to the main image in the forefront which is a baby's hand gripping, or is it gently holding, onto the little finger of a larger hand? The large hand, to me, looks relaxed, leaning on the leg. I can see the creases on the baby's wrist and between the tiny thumb I also see the creases, and first finger as the little arm reaches out to hold onto the larger hand. To me, it reminds me of God's hand reaching gently down and allowing us to take hold of it. This picture is coloured. I also have a larger black and white picture of two different hands but the same sort of idea.

Jesus on that day didn't need to reach out his hand to anyone to allow them to take hold of it. The crowd knew that simply by being in his presence, even at a distance, that they could reach out to Him and He to them. Somehow there was that strong undeniable connection between Jesus and the people. His presence would have been so powerful. They threw their cloaks, their coats, whatever they had as a symbol of welcome to make a clear pathway for Jesus as he rode by.

This donkey's colt that Jesus was riding on must have been at peace even in the noise of this crowd. There is no mention of it being upset with the large crowd or bolting even. Jesus didn't ask for a crowd to be there as he arrived. He didn't ask for a glamorous chariot to take him through the streets. He simply requested from two of his disciples to bring a colt to him and they obeyed.

Jesus went to the Temple, but he didn't stay long, this sounds just such a natural thing to do. This Sunday wasn't like any other Sunday, this was the Sunday of the week that was leading up to the day he going to die. Now that brings another aspect of what lay ahead of him. Yes, we all know that when there has been huge waves of euphoria it often ends in tears. When my sisters and I got overly excited and messing around I can hear my mum saying, "calm down now, calm down or it will all in tears" and sometimes it did, we'd use up too much energy and get a wee bit grumpy with each other then the tears would begin.

Jesus, by the time he was able to have a rest, he would then have to prepare himself for this important week ahead. He would be led barefoot through the street carrying a cross, falling and being helped up. Then lifted up once more

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only not onto a donkey with the sound of Jubilation all around him. He would be lifted up to face his death on the cross. Before then He would have spent time in the garden of Gethsemane, feeling deeply distressed and troubled and his soul would be overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

Jesus, even on that Palm Sunday morning what his fate would be. Jesus, even with this knowledge, continued to reach out to his disciples and the people. Some he touched physically as he ministered to them and some would reach out to him to minister to him. He would eat, he would sleep. He would be anointed with perfumed oil, he would stand up for those being chastised, he would continue to challenge his disciples to be honest about their own actions, "you yourself will disown me three times".

We will continue to celebrate Palm Sunday today. We will reach out to Jesus this week. Is it your hand reaching out to grasp hold of Jesus as we begin Holy Week? Maybe it will be you being asked or encouraged offer your hand, or even a little finger to others who may need it this week. We need to have hope. The crowds on Palm Sunday had lived with the hope of the Messiah coming to them and He did. God kept his promise but there was still a wee way to go before God's work would be completed.

It will be achieved but that is for another day – we hope! Amen.

Thank you, Kim for your message.

We going to listen to some reflective music now, which will lead us into our prayers for God's world.

[Reflective Music]

Hosanna, hosanna, the people cried as this young simple man rode on a donkey, this one man who carried the whole sins of the world on his shoulders, so we can have forgiveness. Jesus who had nothing but gave his all for us, we ask you to forgive us and show us how to share your love.
Lord we need to feel your loving touch.

We think of our world Lord, and all that's happening to your people.
We remember those countries that are going through wars and we ask that they find the right solutions and that peace can be found.
Lord we need to feel your loving touch.

We give thanks for the amazing work that is done by all NHS staff and those working as carers, for the scientists who have worked hard to find vaccinations for the Covid viruses, for all those who care for the people suffering from this virus, we are very aware of the devastating effects it can have on peoples lives and their families.

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Lord we need to feel your loving touch

We think of those who have lost loved ones, who feel the emptiness and despair of grief, also for those nearing their life's end, and we ask for them to be enfolded in your love.

Lord we need to feel your loving touch.

As we begin to reflect on Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Good Friday and the glory of Easter Sunday, we think of those who find this time of year very hard to think about and how unbearable it can be for them to cope with. Lord, we know that because of human kind one very brave man give his all for us in the final sacrifice of death on a cross.

Lord we need to feel your loving touch.

Amen

Let us now share together in 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

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

We're nearing the end of our worship now.

And we're going to sing our last hymn this morning, 'Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim. And this will be followed by a blessing that was recorded by Rev Clare Stainsby.

I wish you all a very happy Palm Sunday.

Hymn: Life high the Cross

*Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.*

Follow the path on which our Captain trod,
our King victorious, Christ the Son of God:
Lift high the Cross...

Each new-born soldier of the Crucified
bears on their brow the seal of him who died:
Lift high the Cross...

Led on their way by this triumphant sign,

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the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine:

Lift high the Cross...

From farthest regions let them homage bring,
and on his cross adore their Saviour King:

Lift high the Cross...

O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
as thou hast promised, draw the world to thee:

Lift high the Cross...

Set up thy throne, that earth's despair may cease
beneath the shadow of its healing peace:

Lift high the Cross...

May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand
And may his blessing be upon you this day and always.

Amen.

CCL: 30925

Make Way, Make Way - Graham Kendrick

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