

St Marc Grenoble

Palm Sunday 2nd April 2023

Matthew 21: 1 - 11, Matthew 26: 14 - 25
Matthew 26: 26 - 35, Matthew 26: 47 - 56
'Hosanna - Betrayal'

Good Morning and Welcome, whether you are here in church or joining on Zoom, you are welcome. **Let's Pray.**

Today is Palm Sunday - the beginning of Holy Week; the climax of Jesus' ministry on earth. A whirlwind of actions and emotions; exciting, terrifying, tragic and victorious - I wonder how it felt to the disciples following Jesus?

What struck you about today's readings. What 'jumped out at you'. Maybe just one word, or one action - please tell us all what hit you Thank you!

I'm going to use a few simple headings to remind us of some of the key points.

Acclamation - Jesus had been steadily making His way towards Jerusalem, for weeks, with remarkable teaching and miraculous healings as He went - transforming people's lives forever. Even bringing one man who'd been dead four days back to life. You can see God was trying to attract people's attention through the things Jesus was doing. Here is the long promised Messiah - the King coming to restore and forgive.

Arriving at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples to borrow a donkey and her unriden foal, fulfilling a prophecy, hundreds of years earlier, by the prophet Zechariah (Zec 9:9): 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout Daughter of Jerusalem, see your king comes to you righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey; on a colt the foal of a donkey.' The people would know the scripture ... **Amazing!** - Did the donkey and colt just happen to be there - **or was it part of God's plan??**

In keeping with ancient tradition, the people welcomed their King by spreading their cloaks on the ground in front of him, cutting branches and throwing them in His path - a traditional sign of respect and humility. They sang Royal chants and psalms: 'Hosanna to the Son of David! The beloved King of Jerusalem.' The whole city was gripped with excitement: 'Who is this?' they asked. 'This is the prophet, Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee' the response; but Prophet or King? **Question for all of us - How often do we throw our hearts and souls into such heartfelt worship, honour and respect for Jesus our King?**

Betrayal - One of Jesus own special friends went to the Chief Priests and asked 'What will you give me to hand Him over to you? Thirty pieces of silver! Thirty pieces of silver to betray your best friend, 'Messiah' God's King - **WHY?**

Question - How often have you betrayed Jesus?? I know I have often ...

Passover - Thousands were in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, the Jewish Festival celebrating God delivering the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

Jesus wanted to celebrate Passover with His disciples, but rather than simply celebrating the Old Covenant, Jesus was preparing them for His New Covenant. A new promise, of a new deliverance for the people of God.

During the meal, Jesus told them clearly He would be betrayed and killed - but also He would be raised up and go ahead of them to Galilee. Jesus was to be the sacrificial Lamb slain for all God's children to pay for our total redemption, deliverance from our sins and granting us the gift of eternal life. The once, for all, sacrifice of His blood, the New Covenant - New Promise for God's children. That is the promise, we celebrate every week in our Holy Communion.

Question - As we celebrate our Holy Communion, are we sometimes too flippant? Do we ever think about the agonising sacrifice Jesus endured to pay for our sins? It's really far too easy to overlook or forget it.

Jesus also told them they would all stumble and fall away, He quoted:

'I shall strike the shepherd and the flock will be scattered.' (Zechariah 13: 7)

Denial - All the disciples promised they would never desert Jesus, but within hours they had all run away. Peter said even if all the others left he would never deny Jesus. Yet we know that before dawn the next morning, before the cock crowed, Peter had denied Jesus three times.

Question - How often do you deny Jesus every week, without really thinking about it, or remembering Peter? The Good news is Jesus forgave Peter, and He will forgive us too.

Redemption - We know that Jesus was tried, flogged, crucified and His body laid in a borrowed tomb. But, we also know He rose again on the third day, and spent time with His disciples before ascending to be with His Father, Our Father in Heaven. Next Sunday, on Easter Day, we will celebrate **His Resurrection and our Redemption! Alleluia!**

But first, we have to live through the trials and pain of Holy Week, and the agony of the Crucifixion on Good Friday.

Please try to be with us on Friday evening this week in Church (may be salle de priere at 7.45pm as we commemorate the crucifixion.

It's the day we remember our Saviour died for us - make every effort to be there to honour and give thanks for His sacrifice for YOU and for all of US

Let's Pray