



## **Palm Sunday - Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April**

Today is Palm Sunday – a day of great excitement and celebration.

It was the day when many believed Jesus, the Messiah, would release them from the oppression and restrictions imposed by the Roman Empire and they would be FREE.

I don't know about you but I am already planning the celebrations we will have when we are released from 'house arrest', due to the covid-19 virus, and we can come together and worship!

Wherever you are – in the kitchen, front room or garden ....

I hope you can sing this song with expectant enthusiasm

**Come on and Celebrate** <https://youtu.be/kog4QkDT4Ho>

### **Opening Prayers**

We are here to meet you today, Jesus.

We don't know quite what to expect.

We think we know what we need,

how you can meet our needs.

But we come humbly, laying our coats before you.

Reveal to us who you are,

how you can be a Saviour in our lives,  
a Saviour in our world today.  
Come Lord Jesus!

We trust your Kingdom to come as we pray

**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.  
And 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,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

If you followed last weeks service on the Passion of Jesus you will remember the passage from **Luke 9:51**

*"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem".*

Jesus and his followers did not just get up and march straight to Jerusalem but continued to teach, preach and heal in many villages and towns along the way. Jesus ministry on earth was approaching fulfillment. For three years he had been showing the Jewish people what the Kingdom of God was like, through his actions and words from scripture.

As they journeyed towards Jerusalem Jesus asked his disciples this question

**Matthew 16:13-20**

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, **"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"** They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are

the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

**Sing**      What kind of man is this      <https://youtu.be/QppTwDmBg3Q>

It is puzzling, to our human way of thinking, why Jesus ordered his disciples not to tell anyone he was the Messiah. After all it would have given him instant fame and mass exposure.

It may have been that what he had to teach his followers (and us) was not yet complete or, as we see in the following hymn, the '*King of all the Earth*' did not come to receive popularity and fame but to give love and service. Much of Jesus teaching used visual imagery and **We have a King who rides a donkey** illustrates what kind of King Jesus came to be.

*We have a king who rides a donkey,  
and his name is Jesus:  
Jesus the king is risen  
early in the morning.*



### **Why riding a donkey?**

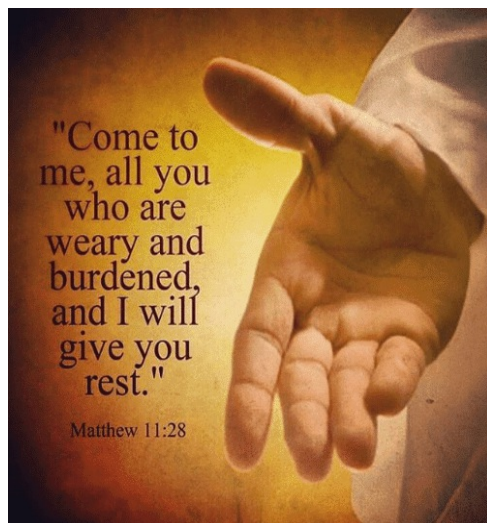
- Jesus came on a colt, the animal of a man of Peace, not on a war horse, the animal of a conquering king.
- His entry on a colt was a picture that all Jerusalem would have seen deep meaning in.
- Around 500 years earlier the prophet Zechariah had prophesied that Israel would overcome her enemies....and in the middle of that prophecy came this verse:

*"See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*  
(Zechariah 9:9)

Trees are waving a royal welcome  
for the king called Jesus:  
Jesus the king is risen  
early in the morning.



We have a king who cares for people,  
and his name is Jesus:  
Jesus the king is risen  
early in the morning.



### **Why was everyone SO excited?**

- Jesus' followers had spent three years hearing him teach, seeing him perform miracles and telling them to keep quiet about the fact that he was the Messiah, the Chosen One sent to free Israel.
- Here at last, for all to see, Jesus went public.
- No wonder *they* celebrated.
- For the crowds who were not yet his followers and who were living under Roman occupation, longing for freedom, here was Jesus acting out the prophecy that said.... "I am the king who will bring victory"
- No wonder *they* were excited.

The whole of the Gospels are filled with stories of Jesus care and compassion:-

- He fed the hungry.
- Healed the sick.
- Reached out to those on the edge of society.
- Treasured and love people and wept in sorrow.

A loaf and a cup upon the table,  
bread-and-wine is Jesus:  
Jesus the king is risen  
early in the morning.



**This is my blood of the covenant, which  
is poured out for many for the  
forgiveness of sins.**

This **new covenant** was

- a promise of redemption by God to people as individuals rather than as a nation
- and on the basis of God's grace rather than a person's adherence to the law.

John 3:16

**For God so loved the world that he gave  
his one and only Son, that whoever  
believes in him shall not perish but  
have eternal life.**

We have a king with a bowl and towel,  
servant-king is Jesus:  
Jesus the king is risen  
early in the morning.



I find the passage from John 13: 1-17 where Jesus, the Rabbi of the group, strips off his outer garments and then kneels at the feet of his followers to wash their feet, to be most humbling and challenging.

Jesus is teaching his disciples what is needed to follow him into the Kingdom of God – as he says in Mark 10:45 – following a dispute between the disciples

**For even the Son of Man did not  
come to be served, but to serve, and  
to give his life as a ransom for  
many."**

What shall we do with our life this morning?  
Give it up in service!  
Jesus the king is risen  
early in the morning.



What must it have been like to have been there on that day?

The account in John's Gospel, taken from The Message, describes the scene:-

### **John 12:12-19**

12-15 The next day the huge crowd that had arrived for the Feast heard that Jesus was entering Jerusalem. They broke off palm branches and went out to meet him. And they cheered:

Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in God's name!

Yes! The King of Israel!

Jesus got a young donkey and rode it, just as the Scripture has it:

No fear, Daughter Zion:  
See how your king comes,  
riding a donkey's colt.

16 The disciples didn't notice the fulfillment of many Scriptures at the time, but after Jesus was glorified, they remembered that what was written about him matched what was done to him.

17-19 The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, was there giving eyewitness accounts. It was because they had spread the word of this latest God-sign that the crowd swelled to a welcoming parade. The Pharisees took one look and threw up their hands: "It's out of control. The world's in a stampede after him."

Read the account again, slowly .....

- Can you hear the noise?
- Whereabouts are you in the crowd?
- Have you been traveling with Jesus or are you one of the group who heard he was 'in town' or are you a curious bystander swept up in the excitement, not really knowing what was happening?

What is your response .....

- Are you one who is laying down their cloak to honour Jesus as King?
- Do you want to follow Jesus?
- Do you want to find out more about him?
- Are you afraid?

**Sing**

Make Way Make Way <https://youtu.be/tK6XuYhL7Jl>

## **Prayer**

The story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem,  
tells us that after his celebrated arrival.  
He went into the Temple  
and looked around at everything.

As we 'gather' for worship today  
may it be with a sense that Jesus  
has walked in too, and is looking around.

May our eyes be open to see Him,  
may our hearts be ready to be seen by Him,  
may our worship be worthy of His presence,  
and may we be transformed  
so that we see the world through His eyes.

**Amen.**

We continue our prayers of intercession as we look around the events of the week  
for the things we have been thankful for;  
for the difficulties we have faced;  
for the people we have met or spoken to;  
for the things that trouble our hearts and minds;  
for the people we love .....

and hold them all before God

**Amen**

## **Sing**

King of Kings, Majesty <https://youtu.be/qs2uWU75Vmw>

King of Kings.  
Accept our hosannas this day.  
May they be accompanied  
by lives of obedience to your way  
and deeds of service and reconciliation  
in your name.