



24A LITURGY ONLINE - PALM SUNDAY

Turning point

Abstract

⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,
"Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Matthew 21:9

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GOSPEL*Matthew 21:1–11*

21 When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” ⁴ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

⁵“Tell the daughter of Zion,

Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.” ⁱ

24A Liturgy Online - Palm Sunday Turning Point

Sunday, April 5, 2020 | Lent | Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday | YEAR A
LITURGY OF THE PALMS

Sixth Sunday in Lent

Psalm Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29
Gospel Matthew 21:1–11ⁱⁱ

Matthew 21.1-11

Jesus enters Jerusalem as a Passover pilgrim for the last time, demonstrating how he brings in God's kingdom and setting the stage for the showdown with those he sees as God's real enemies.

This week's resources explore: a community on the move and a city in turmoil.

	<p>Pre-Service Background - 'God With Us' from All Sons & Daughters</p>
	<p>Greeting May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p>
	<p>We Gather</p> <p>Come, pilgrim people. Come to worship the liberator and peacemaker who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Come to worship, pilgrim people.</p> <p><i>Let us Pray</i> As we gather, bring your palms and branches, your shouts and praise. Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna to the King of kings! Let us journey to Jerusalem to worship the king who came to save us. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song</p> <p>TSI 348 - Ride on, ride on in majesty Ride on, ride on in Majesty - https://youtu.be/VAh1zSQ3P4</p>

Welcome

Today we celebrate Palm Sunday
 It is the 6th Sunday in Lent
 Arguably for some it is also the beginning of Easter

In our worship today
 we think about Jesus who entered Jerusalem
 and the final week of his life.

Jesus could have stayed in Galilee
 But He came to Jerusalem
 so that through the events of Good Friday and Easter,
 he would become the saviour of the World.

What happens when the Queen goes around London in one of her carriages – what do people do?

They line the sides of the road.
 They wave flags.
 They shout and cheer. Why?
 Because they are happy to see her.
 Because they want her to know they are there.
 Because they are giving their support to her for what she does.

Many years ago, Kaiser Wilhelm II went to Jerusalem
 They had to widen the gate into Jerusalem
 to take the width of his glorious carriage.

One was placed a sign next to the gate.

This gate has been widened to make way for the carriage of the king
 But the King of kings was happy to pass through on a donkey.

Today we are thinking about Jesus
 who is on a procession into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey.
 It is difficult, even now,
 to understand what these events have done for us
 People are shouting, and praising God,
 and expressing their thanks for that day,
 and their hopes for the future.

Let us pray

Lord God, let us approach with shouts of praise:
 hosanna in the highest!

Let us draw close to you
 on this day that caused disturbance and disruption.

Let us approach the throne
 of the one who came as a humble servant,
 who came to set us free, to change things for ever.

Hosanna to the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Amen.

	<p>Readings Matthew 21:1-11 New International Version - UK (NIVUK) Jesus' Triumphant Entry</p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord</p> <p>Thanks be to God</p>
	<p>We say Sorry Lord Jesus, you came to change the world. Forgive us when we become complacent, when change is difficult – and we give up.</p> <p>Lord Jesus, you came to serve, not to be served. Forgive us when we put ourselves and our needs before those of our brothers and sisters.</p> <p>Lord Jesus, you came to bring peace. Forgive us when we cause more fights, more trouble, and more wars than peace.</p> <p>Lord Jesus, you came to set the captives free. Forgive us when we don't stand up for justice and freedom for our neighbours.</p> <p>Lord Jesus, you came to meet us where we are. Forgive us when we don't stand with each other through the pain and struggle.</p> <p>Help us to change the world by serving one another, working for peace, standing up for justice, and walking with our fellow pilgrims. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/Song Come People Of The Risen King Keith Getty; Kristyn Getty; Stuart Townend 2007 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.)</p>
	<p>Response</p>
	<p>Hymn/song TIS #333 All glory, laud and honour</p>
	<p>Prayers for all people <i>Just imagine the spectacle as Jesus descends into Jerusalem. You're excited, you're waving your branches. feel the excitement, your at the cusp of a new era in your life, everything is about to change.</i></p> <p>Jesus, we journey with you today as you journey with us. Let us go where you go.</p>

Gracious and loving God,
 You call us to love you with our whole being,
 and to love our neighbours as ourselves.
 At this time of upheaval and distress for nations and people across our world,
 may your love hold us together.
 May your love be the lens through which we see each other and your world.

Lord Jesus Christ, you are present with us,
 as one who knows our suffering,
 bring comfort and peace to all those
 who are grieving the loss of loved ones,
 work, connection and hope for the future.

May we embody your compassion
 responding to the suffering of our neighbours,
 our families, our friends, and strangers with generosity.

Life-giving Spirit, you weave us together as the Body of Christ,
 strengthen our life together,
 even though we are physically separated.

Nurture us in faith and discipleship,
 that we may bear witness through our living,
 to your abundant grace and liberating hope for all people,
 and the whole creation.ⁱⁱⁱ

Lord Jesus,
 we pray for all who give of themselves sacrificially,
 for those whose lives are dedicated to serving others:
 parents, carers, foster carers, doctors, nurses...
 those caring for children or elderly relatives.
 Let us travel together and lighten the load.

We pray for those serving in crisis-torn countries around the world:
 medical staff, those who work in government, the media,
 NGOs and charities...
 who bring food, shelter and healing to those in need,
 sometimes putting their lives on the line.
 Let us travel together and lighten the load.

We pray for those in our communities who need our unconditional love:
 those hurting from broken relationships,
 abuse, bullying, domestic violence...
 children and adults whose lives are bereft of love and hope.
 Let us travel together and lighten the load.

We pray that we might be Easter people,
 laying down our lives to serve others,
 bringing hope to hopeless situations
 the hope of the cross and resurrection.
 Let us travel together and lighten the load.
 Amen.

	<p>Lord's Prayer Lord's Prayer</p> <p>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN</p>
	<p>Hymn/song The Summons</p>
	<p>We are sent out As we leave this place, let us celebrate the king, the liberator, the servant, the one who caused disturbance – and let us do the same. Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>
	<p>Benediction Shalom</p>
	<p>Thank you</p>

Beneath The Cross

Matthew 21:1-11

After years of wandering,
a young man realised something important was missing from his life.
He found himself entering a church.
People were putting on long robes and wrapping headdresses around their heads.
It was Palm Sunday and the church was re-enacting the crucifixion in costume.
"Come be a part of the mob," a stranger asked him.
You can be part of the crowd that shouted,
"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"
This was a bit weird but he hesitantly he agreed.

Then another stranger hurried up to him.
"The man who was supposed to be,
one of the thieves on the cross, didn't show up," he said.
"Would you take his place?"
Again the visitor agreed
and was shown to the cross where he would look on as Jesus died.

Just then, something about his manner caught a member's eye.
He turned to him and asked, "Have you ever been to church before"
"No," the visitor replied softly, "
What the church didn't know was that he had been in prison for ten years.
He was a real thief.
Even after his release he had gone on stealing cars
until one day he had realised something was missing from his life. (1)

The time had come for Jesus to make his way to the holy city of Jerusalem.
He and his disciples had been traveling the countryside.
A crowd followed them nearly everywhere they went.
His teachings about the coming of the kingdom of God
excited both the disciples and the crowds.

The disciples were thinking what would happen once Jesus took power.
He tried to tell them what would happen.
That He would "undergo great suffering
at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes,
and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

The disciples didn't understand.
"God forbid it, Lord!" Peter exclaimed.
"This must never happen to you."

The crowds also had their expectations.

They thought Jesus would not only establish his kingdom
but would also overthrow the hated Romans.
They thought something wonderful was about to happen
and they were going to be part of it.

On that first Palm Sunday expectations were running high.
Something was about to happen.
Everyone could feel it.
And something did happen.

FOR ONE THING, JESUS FULFILLED A PROPHECY.

On the outskirts of Jerusalem,
with the holy city looming clearly in their view,
Jesus sent two of his disciples ahead to find a donkey and a colt.
Jesus told them,

"Go into the village ahead of you,
and immediately you will find a donkey tied,
and a colt with her;
untie them and bring them to me."

We are given a clue that Jesus was clearly in control of the situation.
He was not being portrayed as a victim of circumstance.
He told them that if anyone questioned them all they were to say was,
"The Lord needs them."

Centuries before Zechariah had prophesied of this day,
"Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Jesus rides on a donkey fulfilling an ancient prophecy,
but clearly in total control.
He knows what will happen to him in Jerusalem.
But still he rides on.
He doesn't seek to avoid the task to which he has been called.

It reminds me of Superman in the movies.
Just think of Superman confronting one of the bad guys.
The bad guy would fire his gun at Superman.
Superman would smirk and throw his chest out.
The bullets would bounce harmlessly away.

But did you ever notice what happens next?
when the guy runs out of bullets,
he would throw the gun at Superman.
And Superman ducked." He ducked!
I'll bet you never thought about that before.
Bullets bounced off him,
but when a gun was thrown at him, Superman ducked.

Perhaps this might serve to remind us
that Jesus did not have to enter Jerusalem.
He could have ducked his mission.
But still he rode on.

MEANWHILE, THE PEOPLE CELEBRATE.

Jesus got on the donkey
And the crowd that followed him erupted in cheering.
They "spread their cloaks on the road,
and others cut branches from the trees
and spread them on the road."
People ran ahead of him shouting "Hosanna."
The time had finally arrived grey thought.
Jesus was about to act.
Jesus would enter Jerusalem like a conquering king
entering the capital city to claim power for himself.

The city was already overflowing with people celebrating the Passover.
When they saw Jesus approaching, riding a donkey
they came alive with excitement.

Spontaneously they joined in the shouting:

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in highest heaven!"

There is a story about the Palm Sunday celebration at one church.

It was their tradition to celebrate Palm Sunday
with members marching outside the church waving palm branches
as they sang the Palm Sunday hymns.

But because they knew that Palm Sunday was but a prelude to Good Friday,
They found they were always a bit more reserved than the original crowd.

Somehow, knowing the rest of the story makes it hard
to celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

We hold back, and somehow we think
if we don't get too exuberant with the palm frond on Sunday,
maybe we can escape the pain or the collective guilt on Good Friday." (3)

The first Palm Sunday crowd was filled with excitement and expectation.
There was no way they were going to hold back their celebration.

FOR JESUS, HOWEVER, ABOVE THE SHOUTED "HOSANNAS,"
AND THE WAVING PALM BRANCHES, STOOD THE CROSS.

He was not deluded by the cheering crowds.

He knew what was coming next.

He knew what he had to do.

There was no turning back.

A fellow was the narrator at his church's Easter cantata a few years ago.
 As they were about to go in he was asked if
 he would carry the cross out at the end of the service.
 The fellow agreed without giving it a second thought.

But as the cantata went on, he had time to think about what he had been asked to do.
 He could see the cross standing there
 and As he thought about carrying it out.
 He had a strong feeling of not being worthy.
 He thought that someone else should do it.

At the end of the service, the cross was brought over and handed it to him.
 He was struck by its size and weight.
 It wasn't a very big cross,
 but at that moment it seemed very large and very heavy.
 The walk from the front of the church to the back seemed a long way.
 A part of him wanted to get it over with;
 to get out of there and put it down,
 because he felt very uncomfortable with it."

Then something unexpected happened.
 He turned and watched as the children come out of the sanctuary.
 A little boy looked up at the cross and touched it.
 He asked, "Did Jesus really die on a cross like this?"
 It was all that the fellow could do to say yes.
 He'll never forget what happened next.
 The boys face lit up as he began to comprehend,
 probably for the first time in his life what Jesus had done for him.
 As he put the cross down,
 he felt very pleased that he had been given the opportunity to carry it." (4)

On that first Palm Sunday,
 Jesus knew that before the week was over
 he would be carrying a cross through the streets of Jerusalem.
 There would be no cheering crowds that day.
 He knew what he had to do to fulfil God's will.
 He had to give his life for a dying world.

IN KOREA, THERE ONCE STOOD AN ANCIENT BELL - FAMOUS FOR ITS BEAUTIFUL TONE.
 While it was being made, a young maiden was sacrificed.
 Soldiers were sent to fetch a young girl.
 Coming upon a poor mother in a farm village with her small daughter,
 they took the child away,
 while she cried out piteously: "Emille, Emille!" "Mother! O Mother!"

The bell, called the Emille Bell, made a sound more beautiful than any other.

It is said when it rang,
the people praised the art that had produced such a beautiful sound.
But whenever the mother whose child had been sacrificed heard it,
her heart broke anew.
Her neighbours, who knew of her sacrifice and pain,
could not hear the beautiful tone without pain either.
Only those who understand the sacrifice can feel the pain.
Others just enjoy the sound. (5)

DO YOU HEAR THE SOUND?

Do you understand the sacrifice?

Jesus fulfilled an ancient prophecy.

He set his course.

He finished his race.

And he did it for you and me.

"The Thief." Jo Hart. *Snowflakes in September*. Nashville: Dimensions for Living, 1992, pp. 13-14.

The Road to Daybreak. Henri J. M. Nouwen. New York: Doubleday, 1988, pp. 134-135.

Stories for the Christian Year. Eugene H. Peterson. (ed.) New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992, pp. 104-109.

Lectionary Stories. John E. Sumwalt, Lima OH: C. S. S. Publishing Company, Inc., 1992, pp. 61-62.

Lee Oo Chung, "One Woman™s Confession of Faith." *New Eyes for Reading: Biblical and Theological Reflections by Woman from the Third World*, eds. John S. Pobee and Barbel von Wartenberg-Potter (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), pp. 19-20. Cited by Thomas Troeger, *Imagining the Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992).

ⁱ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sunday Prayer : Dr Deidre Palmer – President of the Uniting Church in Australia
<https://assembly.uca.org.au/component/k2/item/3150-prayers>