

Worship at home  
March 28, 2021  
*Palm Sunday*



**God calls us to worship**

“When the time came for the Lord Jesus to be received up,  
He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.  
Today we remember His entry as King into the Holy City.”<sup>1</sup>

“Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!  
Lo, your king comes to you;  
triumphant and victorious is he,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”<sup>2</sup>

**Hymn** #214 “All glory, laud and honour”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhbYS31TYbs>

**We bring our praise and confession**

“God of all people and all places,  
God of all situations and all times,  
you are the light of the minds that know you,  
and the strength of those who serve you in times of challenge and times of joy.  
We come to worship you this day,  
setting aside our work and responsibilities,  
our relaxation and pastimes,  
to listen for your voice  
and reflect on the wisdom and courage we witness in Jesus.  
As tension mounts for him and for us,  
we turn to you for hope and healing, for courage and compassion,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Prayers for the Christian Year*, Church of Scotland, 1952. Prayers for Palm Sunday.

<sup>2</sup> Zechariah 9:9

in the name of Christ, our Lord.

God of compassion,  
we confess that we prefer darkness to your light, and our ways to yours.  
We do what is easy rather than what is right.  
We have been dishonest with ourselves and each other.  
Forgive our fleeting enthusiasms and shallow commitments.  
As we witness again the story of Jesus confronting his enemies,  
strengthen our desire to follow him and serve you with courage like his.”<sup>3</sup>

### **God assures us of His grace and mercy**

St. John records Jesus’ words: I do not call you servants any longer, but I have called you friends. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. Dear friends, Christ has laid down his life for us and invites us to love one another as he has loved us. Rejoice in his redeeming love and share it with each other day by day.<sup>4</sup>

### **We offer our lives and resources**

*If you are a member or adherent of either of the Moore Presbyterian congregations, please remember to submit your offering to the appropriate treasurer. For contact information, speak with Rev. Ian.*

---

<sup>3</sup> Worship resource for March 28, 2021 available at: <https://presbyterian.ca/worship>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## God speaks to us through His Word

1 Kings 1:32-40  
Zechariah 9:9-10  
Mark 11:1-11

### The King has come

Have you ever heard someone say: “If you keep doing that, you’re going to get yourself killed!”? One could say that about Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on the first day of what would be the last week of his pre-resurrection life.

There was, of course, nothing obviously unusual about Jesus making the journey to the Holy City. He was Jewish, and it was the season for the festival of the Passover: A celebration of God’s mighty act of delivering the Israelites from the tyranny of their Egyptian oppressors. Jerusalem was bursting at the seams with worshippers, seekers, curious onlookers, and agitators.

The climate was perfect for riots and upheavals. And, both the civic and religious authorities were on high alert. Tension between the Roman empire and the Jewish citizens had been mounting. And, in this climate of celebrating God’s deliverance of His people from the tyrants, Rome was edgy. The military presence in the holy city was heightened during this week. The temple authorities were edgy as well. As much as some of them may also have longed for independence from Rome, they recognized that much of their institutional stability came from Roman protection and conciliation. As long as they didn’t rock the boat, Rome was happy to allow the Jews to carry on their business, uphold their religious laws, and worship as they had for centuries. So, in addition to the intensified watchfulness of the military, the scribes and the chief priests were on the lookout for anyone who might cause a stir that would precipitate the Roman army shutting down the Passover celebrations.

What was different about Jesus’ pilgrimage is that he wasn’t there solely to celebrate the Passover. He was there to complete his purpose. And everything he did was carefully orchestrated.

He and his disciples lodged in a nearby village east of the city. This allowed him to enter Jerusalem from the east, passing first through the Kidron Valley, near the Gihon spring. Thus, he re-enacted the procession of King David’s son Solomon many years before while also enacting the messianic prophecy from Zechariah.

By entering the city through the Kidron Valley, on a donkey, Jesus has essentially proclaimed that the true descendent of David, the true heir to the throne has returned to the holy city.

As he approached the city, some people recognized the symbolism. They spread and waved leafy branches cut from nearby trees. We might think this a rather innocuous act; however, centuries before there was a Jewish revolt against the Greek empire. And, under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, the Jews reclaimed the temple from the Greeks and restored worship therein. In their celebrations they sang and waved palm branches. Henceforth, they became a symbol of Jewish independence and victory over the tyranny of their oppressors. As he rode on the donkey, following the path of David's successor, and as the people waved their branches, they shouted:

*Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!*

“Hosanna” means “Save us!” What they were shouting was a plea for this descendent of King David, who was fulfilling the messianic prophecy, to enter Jerusalem, reclaim the throne from Herod, and ‘Save us from the Roman oppressors!’

And Jesus did nothing to silence the crowd.

In fact, in Luke's telling, the Pharisees were on edge and pleaded with Jesus to order the people to stop, but he simply responded: “If these were silent, the stones would shout out.”<sup>5</sup>

This is why he had come.

He was setting the stage to reclaim what was his own.

With the pageantry of the donkey, the branches, the hosannas, and, as we'll see as the week unfolds, the condemnation of the temple authorities, Jesus is doing everything he could to get himself killed!

And that's precisely the point.

Jesus had been talking with his disciples about this for weeks. He is the Messiah. He has come to reclaim his kingdom, yet he has brought no military force, no war-horse,

---

<sup>5</sup> Luke 19:40.

no chariots, no battle bows. Instead, he's entered the city on a donkey to be betrayed by one of his own, handed over to the chief priests and scribes who will condemn him to death, he will be rejected by his closest friend, and handed over to the Gentiles/Romans who will mock him, spit upon him, flog him, and who will crucify him on a cross.

As Mark has recorded, Jesus began his ministry with the proclamation that "the kingdom of God has come near." For the peaceful kingdom of God to be established on earth as in heaven, the chaotic tyranny of sin must be ended. And this can happen only through the sacrifice of a perfect, spotless Passover Lamb. The King has come to deliver his subjects from evil. For that, the Righteous King has come to give his life for the lives of his people.

---

*Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!  
He has done what is necessary to save us!*

---

As we enter Holy Week, let us proclaim the Lordship of Jesus in our hearts and minds as well as in our words and deeds. Let us recommit to trusting the ways and means of the kingdom of God. Let us cut off our chariots, war-horses, and battle bows. Let us lay down our defenses, our pride, our ego. Let us accept Jesus as Lord, adopt the stance of servant of all, embrace prayer and sacred dependence, and trust our King is able to support us in the process.

For the glory of His name, the good of our souls, and the peace of our community.

Amen.

## **We respond with faith and service**

Creator of the universe, Redeemer of creation,  
we trust that you are at work in all situations, restoring and renewing all things.  
On this day, we find the courage of Jesus inspiring  
so, we pray that those in need will find such courage, too,  
as your gift to make a difference in the challenges they face.

Hear us as we bring to you our concerns,  
and send your redeeming power to touch our lives and your world once more.

Wherever people are oppressed by the powers of poverty, sickness or grief,  
ease their pain and restore them to wholeness.  
Wherever people challenge regimes or systems marked by tyranny and brutality,  
encourage them with your Spirit and lead them to liberty.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Wherever people are burdened by the weight of hostility, greed or jealousy,  
restore their strength to resist and show them signs of hope.  
Wherever people are persecuted because of race or creed,  
or for the truth they tell;  
let your truth and justice prevail.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Wherever the earth cries out because people consume too much and ignore the danger  
signs,

Wherever care for the ground and water, for endangered climate and endangered  
species defies human carelessness,  
let your love for the goodness of creation move the hearts of your people.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for your church in every place, whether it be fragile or strong, tired or  
energized. Inspire us with your Holy Spirit to offer ourselves in gratitude for the gift of  
Jesus Christ, serving creatively and courageously in his name:

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Hear us as we pray to you in silence for those situations close to our hearts.

In your grace and love, restore all things.

*(Hold a silence)*

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Now we pray as Jesus taught us: **The Lord's Prayer**<sup>6</sup>

**Hymn** #217 "Ride on, ride on in majesty"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAh1zSQ3P4>

**God sends us with His blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you,  
the Lord be kind and gracious to you,  
the Lord look upon you with favour,  
and grant you peace.  
Amen.

---

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from worship resource for March 28, 2021 available at: <https://presbyterian.ca/worship>