

Order of Service for 10th April 2022

Parade Service - Palm Sunday - Who is Jesus?

Welcome

Hello and welcome to Hearsall at Home for Palm Sunday - 10th April 2022. As we picture Jesus riding on the donkey, we'll be considering, Who is Jesus?

Call to Worship

22 The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

23 the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes.

24 The Lord has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.

25 Lord, save us!
Lord, grant us success!

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
From the house of the Lord we bless you.

27 The Lord is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
up to the horns of the altar.

Psalm 118: 22 - 27

We hear the song *Hosanna* from Jesus Christ Superstar...

Hosanna!

Song Hosanna!

Chorus

Hosanna, Hey Sanna, Sanna, Sanna Ho!

Sanna Hey, Sanna Ho, Sanna.

Hey JC, JC, won't you smile at me?

Sanna Ho, Sanna Hey, Superstar.

Hosanna, Hey Sanna, Sanna, Sanna Ho,

Sanna Hey, Sanna Ho, Sanna.

Hey JC, JC, you're alright by me!

Sanna Ho, Sanna Hey, Superstar!

Jesus:

Why waste your breath moaning at the crowd?

Nothing can be done to stop the shouting.

If every tongue was still, the noise would still continue,

The rocks and stones themselves would start to sing.

Chorus

Hosanna, Hey Sanna, Sanna, Sanna Ho,

Sanna Hey, Sanna Ho, Sanna.

Hey JC, JC, won't you fight for me?

Sanna Ho, Sanna Hey, Superstar!

Hosanna, Hey Sanna, Sanna, Sanna Ho!

Sanna Hey, Sanna Ho, Sanna.

Hey JC, JC, won't you die for me?

Sanna Ho, Sanna Hey, Superstar!

Opening Thanksgiving Prayer (Angela Ashwin)

Jesus, Lord of the Journey,

we thank you

that you set your face firmly towards Jerusalem,

with a single eye and pure intention,

knowing what lay ahead but never turning aside.

Jesus, Lord of the Palms,

we thank you

that you enjoyed the Hallelujahs of ordinary people,

living fully in that moment of delight

and accepting their praise.

Jesus, Lord of the Cross,

we thank you

that you went into the heart of our evil and pain,

along a way that was both terrible and wonderful,

as your kingship became your brokenness

and your dying became love's triumph.

The Lord's Prayer

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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Let's celebrate God's power and love with a couple of worship songs...

Song: Our God is a Great Big God

Chorus x 2

*Our God is a great big God,
Our God is a great big God,
Our God is a great big God,
And He holds us in His hands.*

He's higher than a skyscraper,
And He's deeper than a submarine.
He's wider than the universe,
And beyond my wildest dreams,
And He's known me, and He's loved me,
Since before the world began.
How wonderful to be a part of
God's amazing plan.

Chorus x 2

Song My Lighthouse

Verse 1

In my wrestling and in my doubts,
In my failures you won't walk out.
Your great love will lead me through.
You are the peace in my troubled sea, whoa oh,
You are the peace in my troubled sea.

Verse 2

In the silence you won't let go,
In my questions your truth will hold,
Your great love will lead me through.
You are the peace in my troubled sea, whoa oh,
You are the peace in my troubled sea.

Chorus

My Lighthouse, my Lighthouse (Whoa-o-a-oh)
Shining in the darkness,
I will follow You. (Whoa oh)
My Lighthouse, my Lighthouse, (Whoa-o-a-oh)
I will trust the promise
You will carry me safe to shore, (Oh-a-oh-oh-o)
Safe to shore, (Oh-a-oh-oh-o)
Safe to shore, (Oh-a-oh-oh-o)
Safe to shore.

Verse 3

I won't fear what tomorrow brings,
With each morning I'll rise and sing.
My God's love will lead me through.
You are the peace in my troubled sea, whoa oh,
You are the peace in my troubled sea –You are my light!

Chorus

Fire before us; You're the brightest.

You will lead us through the storm.

REPEAT x4

Chorus

My Lighthouse, my Lighthouse (Whoa-o-a-oh)

Shining in the darkness,

I will follow You. (Whoa oh)

My Lighthouse, my Lighthouse, (Whoa-o-a-oh)

I will trust the promise

You will carry me safe to shore, (Oh-a-oh-oh-o)

Safe to shore, (Oh-a-oh-oh-o)

Safe to shore, (Oh-a-oh-oh-o)

Safe to shore.

Offering

Lord, your goodness knows no bounds. Everything comes from you, and of your own do we give you. Receive the gifts we offer today and bless them to the service of the world. Amen.

Bible Reading

Luke 19: 28 - 40

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as king

²⁸ After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ 'Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" say, "The Lord needs it.'"

³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?'

³⁴ They replied, 'The Lord needs it.'

³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

³⁸ 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!'^[a]

'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!'

⁴⁰ 'I tell you,' he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.'

Our reading is dramatised in our next happy song: *Here comes Jesus riding into town...*

Songs **Here comes Jesus riding into town**

All-Age Talk

Well, what do you see, when you imagine Palm Sunday? What would the participants in the original events have seen? Let's think of some of the characters in Luke's story.

- There would have been **an unnamed keeper of donkeys** - perhaps a friend of Jesus - who has been happy to lend Jesus a young colt. Perhaps she or he feels curiosity about what Jesus is up to next.
- Of course, the disciples were there, and we might imagine **a particular disciple** enjoying with pride the glory Jesus was getting; feeling excited at how amazingly popular Jesus seemed to be; and yet that sense of pride would have been mixed with a sense of foreboding at the strange predictions Jesus had made concerning his fate in Jerusalem.
- There were many **Passover pilgrims** already in the city for the coming big festival. They would typically greet a fellow pilgrim, quoting the pilgrim's welcome of Psalm 118: 26 - *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord* - but sensing that this is a special pilgrim, the way Luke tells it, they change the original a bit and say, blessed is the **king** who comes in the name of the Lord. I wonder in what sense they would have called him a king.
- **A clergyman** - anyway a religious expert of some kind: a scribe, a priest - might have had Malachi 3:1 in mind - *the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple*. If they were spiritually open, they might have just wondered whether Jesus was in some way a fulfilment of Malachi's ancient words, *The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple*.

- There were plenty of children there. **A child** - would be enjoying the happy festival atmosphere and sensing something wonderful in Jesus. They may not have known what to make of it all but would have enjoyed the celebratory vibe.
- There would have been some Pharisees there - they are mentioned later in the story. **A Pharisee** was someone who was trying hard to follow all the rules to be holy, to please God – and might have felt irritated and threatened by the popularity of Jesus.
- And then, of course, there was **the young donkey** probably confused by the crowd and wanting its mother. It was, of course, quite unaware of the old quote from the prophet that may have been on Jesus' mind: Zechariah 9:9 - *Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*
- And **Jesus** - facing the city of his destiny, came knowing he would suffer, die and rise again to bring hope for the whole world.

So many different people milling together on that busy day, each with their own particular ideas about Jesus!

What do **you** feel about Jesus today?

- Some may feel simple **curiosity** and want to find out more. In that case I encourage you to read the gospel.
- Some may feel **happy** to know that a good man called Jesus once walked this earth. There are good people around.
- Some of us may sense a **mild threat** or defensiveness - after all, Jesus did have a way of turning the world upside down.
- Perhaps a few of us today might feel some **confusion** - not sure who Jesus is or what he wants?
- Some of us may feel **we've heard it all before**; we've got complacent and if so, are we missing something absolutely vital in the reality of Jesus? So many have known Jesus and had their lives enriched and inspired and blessed. If you think you've heard it all before, are you prepared to look again? Are you missing something?
- Can you think about Jesus in terms of your own **Destiny**? Do you sense Jesus might just offer the best route through life, not an easy route, but an authentic way of being alive, and the source of life in all its multifaceted glory?

As we look at Jesus from the crowd, we might want to consider the answer to the question of Luke 9:20:

But what about you? Who do you say I am?

Amongst a crowd of different opinions, can you have the courage of developing your own view? What about you? Who do you think Jesus is?

It's no exaggeration to say that a whole lifetime can turn on how we answer that question. How can it matter so much?

Well, if we see Her Majesty the Queen passing by in her car, we might give a polite wave and then, when she's gone, just get on with the rest of our day.

If we see a celebrity - perhaps a singer performing in some online concert - they might make us feel really happy and excited for a time, but then we switch off our screen and get on with normal life.

Not so with Jesus.

If we call him **Lord**, this is not a ceremonial nod to a head of state passing in her car, but a decision to build our lives around Jesus' teaching, promises and example.

If we call him **Saviour**, this is not a slogan shouted during an excitable hour or so with a charismatic celebrity, but a decision to trust he loves us. The cross of Jesus would come in five days' time, on Good Friday. This is the ultimate proof of God's love.

So, what about you? Jesus asks, '*Who do you say that I am?*' If we trust Jesus' words about himself, we know he is not just another distant celebrity, nor some remote ruler. He is the Messiah, the One who was to come, the Saviour, the Lord, coming to his temple. And his temple is not an impressive religious building in Jerusalem; his temple is your heart. His kingdom is not of this world; he is a king of hearts.

So, if we truly see Jesus for who he is, we can't just watch him pass by on Palm Sunday and get on with our life as normal.

Soon we will sing, *Lift High the Cross*. Well, that's great. It's a precious Hearsall tradition on Palm Sunday. But if we really lift high the cross, we're saying:

- Jesus has rescued me, and I trust my life to his love
- Jesus is the ruler of my heart. He's the King of my heart. From now on, his way is going to be my way. Lift high the cross!

There may be people listening today who come from other religious traditions. I have no desire to deny your beliefs or culture. In whatever way we may find God, our message today is simple enough. God, if we take him seriously, can never be a detail in a life; someone we consider occasionally or from afar. If we would know him, he must be taken to heart, because only the eyes of the heart can see who he really is.

St Richard, who was Bishop of Chichester for eight years in the mid-13th century, knew both hard work and suffering. Though a gifted scholar and lawyer, he didn't mind physical labour; and as Bishop he found himself homeless in his own diocese

for a time. He is famous for a prayer that bears his name. It reflects the commitment and 'stickability' needed by anyone who seeks to be a true follower of Jesus.

*Thanks be to you, our Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits which you have given us,
for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us.
Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may we know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly,
day by day.
Amen.*

We listen to a well-known setting of St Richard's prayer...

Song Day by Day from Godspell

Day by day,
Day by day,
Oh, dear Lord, three things I pray:

To see thee more clearly,
To love thee more dearly,
To follow thee more nearly, day by day.

Prayers of Concern

Lord, we bring our concerns for the world that you have made.

For victims of warfare in Ukraine and around the world. Save us Lord; have mercy on us all.

For the perilous state of the earth's climate as we continue to burn fossil fuels. Save us Lord. Have mercy on us all.

For the sickness so many face from covid and other causes. Save us Lord; have mercy on us all.

We pray for the leaders of nations. Grant them the courage, imagination, wisdom and tenacity they need to build peace. We pray for ordinary people whose lives have been shattered by warfare. We pray for people living in the fear of violence. Save us Lord; have mercy on us all.

We pray for scientists, engineers, business people and policy makers, as they grapple with the rising danger of climate change. We are told by the experts that we face terrifying storms, searing heat waves and regional water shortages, unless we rapidly curtail our dependence on fossil fuels. Jolt us all into making substantial

changes to our lifestyles and wake the world up to the nightmare consequences of business as usual. Save us Lord; have mercy on us all.

We pray for all who work to help the nations manage the continuing reality of covid. As nations relax restrictions, we see cases rising, with many in hospital and some losing their lives. We pray for health care workers, health policy makers and governments, as they lead our continued response to this pandemic. We pray for the sick and the bereaved. We pray for those with long covid, and we continue to remember all who have particular vulnerabilities at this time. Save us Lord; have mercy on us all.

In closing, good Lord, we pray for those people we know who are in particular need at this time. We hold them in our hearts and seek your special loving blessing on each one. Please bring healing, hope, joy, reassurance, comfort, guidance and grace according to their needs.

We bring all our prayers in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

So, we come to the point where we make our declaration: Name Jesus, Lord! Make him our Saviour! Lift High the Cross!

Hymn (BPW 575) **Lift High the Cross**

Chorus

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

Verse 1

Come, Christians, follow where our Saviour trod,
Our King victorious, Christ, the Son of God.

Chorus

Verse 2

All new-born servants of the crucified
Bear on their brow the seal of Christ who died.

Chorus

Verse 3

Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
The hosts of God in conquering ranks combine.

Chorus

Verse 4

O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
Your death has brought us life eternally.

Chorus

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

Verse 5

So shall our song of triumph ever be:
Praise to the Crucified for victory.

Chorus

Amen

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ;
And the love of God;
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all, evermore.

Amen

Sung Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you
Wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness;
Protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing
At the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing
Once again into our doors.

Playout Song: ***The Outlaw*** by Larry Norman, sung by Nick Leonard

Some say he was an outlaw, that he wandered 'cross the land
With a band of unschooled ruffians and few old fishermen.
No one knew just where he came from or exactly what he'd done
But they said it must be something bad that kept him on the run.

Some say he was a poet, that he'd stand upon the hill,
That his voice could calm an angry crowd or make the waves stand still,
That he spoke in many parables that few could understand
But the people sat for hours just to listen to this man.

Some say he was a sorcerer, a man of mystery,
He could walk upon the water, he could make a blind man see;
That he conjured wine at weddings and did tricks with fish and bread,
That he talked of being born again and raised people from the dead.

Some say a politician, who spoke of being free.
He was followed by the masses on the shores of Galilee.
He spoke out against corruption, and he bowed to no decree,
And they feared his strength and power, so they nailed him to a tree.

Some say he was the Son of God, a man above all men,
That he came to be a servant and to set us free from sin.
And that's who I believe he was, 'cause that's who I believe,
And he left his Holy Spirit for the faithful to receive.