

ORDER OF SERVICE Palm Sunday – 05/04/20



PRAISE: Hy 364 All glory, laud and honour,
Prayer

PRAISE: Hy 367 Hosanna, loud hosanna

READING: Psalm 118:19-29

PRAISE: Hy 82 Pray that Jerusalem may have

READING: Luke 19:28-38

Prayer of Intercession

PRAISE: Hy 356 Meekness and majesty,

The Message

PRAISE: Hy 365 Ride on! Ride on in majesty!

Benediction. Go in peace,
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and Fellowship in the Holy Spirit, be with us all **3-fold AMEN**

CH4 786 May the God of peace go with us
as we travel from this place;
may the love of Jesus keep us
firm in hope and full of grace. Tune: Ae fond kiss

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Introduction

This is a very special Sunday for us in our Christian Faith – Palm Sunday. Before we start the service, we should remind ourselves of the atmosphere on that day – and why it was there. It was not newly made for us. The Jews had celebrated their weekly Sabbath from Friday sunset through Saturday. Now they were into a new week – and a very special one at that.

This was the week that would culminate in the annual Passover Celebrations – when the Jews would celebrate their escape from Egypt under Moses so long ago.

Most adult males from within Palestine would be there, with families. Many Jews from far off countries of the known world would be there – all Jews tried to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem at least once in their lifetime.

So, there were multitudes of people. Most of them would be able to go to the Temple and walk about – but when it came to night-time, they had to go out to the surrounding countryside to obtain sleeping quarters.

This meant an influx of people every morning in through the City gates. They were happy, full of fervour and happiness for being there, looking forward to celebrating Passover in Jerusalem.

Some had other, extra agendas. There were many trying to use the situation to incite trouble for the occupying Roman authorities.

Jesus' disciples saw him as a king and wanted to celebrate him and to warn off the Jewish religious authorities who were trying to get rid of him.

Jesus wanted to correct his Disciples' understanding and give them a more accurate picture to remember him by.

It was a special day for the Jews – now even more special for us.

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CH4 364

[Refrain:]

All glory, laud, and honour
to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring!

1 You are the King of Israel,
great David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming,
our King and Blessèd One. [Refrain]

2 The company of angels
is praising you on high,
while we and all creation
together make reply. [Refrain]

3 The people of the Hebrews
with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before you we present. [Refrain]

4 To you before your Passion,
they sang their hymns of praise;
to you, now high exalted,
our melody we raise. [Refrain]

5 Their praises you accepted;
accept the prayers we bring,
in every good delighting,
our great and gracious King: [Refrain]

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Lord God Almighty, we seek to worship you. Using our minds and imaginations we join the crowds who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. We rejoice that we can share in the wonder and joy of that occasion. They were all on their way to worship you in your Temple. We make our own spiritual pilgrimage at the start of Holy Week – and want to feel your power and strength available to us in the days that lie ahead.

Most Gracious God, we remember the mixed feelings and the misunderstandings among the disciples and people at that time – and ask that you will guide us to use our worship to good use.

We know our faults and failings – how quickly we jump to promise you love and support – how easily we slide away from it and forget to work at it. We know that we must stay close to you to be energised towards meaningful living – but we are unwilling to expose ourselves to the nearness of your Spirit.

Forgive our fear and trembling. Give us the understanding, wisdom, vision and guidance that will enable us to see clearly how we should live in Jesus' way and become your children – with all the blessings that await for us.

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We ask it in his name as we use his words, saying,

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 debts,

as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil,

For Thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

For ever AMEN



CH4 367

1 Hosanna, loud hosanna,
the little children sang,
through city street and temple
their joyful welcome rang.
They shouted out their praises,
to Christ, the children's friend,
who welcomes all with blessing,
whose love will never end.

2 From Olivet they followed
a large exultant crowd,
the victor palm branch waving,
and chanting clear and loud;
bright angels joined the chorus,
beyond the cloudless sky,
'Hosanna in the highest!
Glory to God on high!'

3 "Hosanna in the highest!"
That ancient song we sing,
for Christ is our Redeemer,
the Lord of heaven our King.
Oh, may we ever praise him
with heart and life and voice,
and in his blissful presence
eternally rejoice.

Psalm 118:19-29

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of the Temple; I will go in and give thanks to the LORD!

²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD; only the righteous can come in.

²¹ I praise you, LORD, because you heard me, because you have given me victory.

²² The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all.

²³ This was done by the LORD; what a wonderful sight it is!

²⁴ This is the day of the LORD's victory; let us be happy, let us celebrate!

²⁵ Save us, LORD, save us! Give us success, O LORD!

²⁶ May God bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD! From the Temple of the LORD we bless you.

²⁷ The LORD is God; he has been good to us. With branches in your hands, start the festival and march round the altar.

²⁸ You are my God, and I give you thanks; I will proclaim your greatness.

²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good, and his love is eternal.

CH4 82

1 PRAY that Jerusalem may have
Peace and felicity:
Let them that love thee and thy peace
Have still prosperity.

2 Therefore I wish that peace may still
Within thy walls remain,
And ever may thy palaces
Prosperity retain.

3 Now, for my friends' and brethren's sake,
Peace be in thee, I'll say;
And for the house of God our Lord
I'll seek thy good always.



LUKE 19:28-38

The Triumphant Approach to Jerusalem

²⁸ Jesus said this and then went on to Jerusalem ahead of them. ²⁹ As he came near Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead ³⁰ with these instructions; “Go to the village there ahead of you; as you go in, you will find a colt tied up that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If someone asks you why you are untying it, tell him that the Master needs it.”

³² They went on their way and found everything just as Jesus had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying it?”

³⁴ “The Master needs it;” they answered, ³⁵ and they took the colt to Jesus. Then they threw their cloaks over the animal and helped Jesus get on. ³⁶ As he rode on, people spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷ When he came near Jerusalem, at the place where the road went down the Mount of Olives, the large crowd of his disciples began to thank God and praise him in loud voices for all the great things that they had seen. ³⁸ “God bless the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God!”

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Heavenly Father, we thank you for all the ingredients that make up our personality and make each one of us a unique person – whom you love. Help us to appreciate how important each one of us is – to you as well as to ourselves. Bless us in all our circumstances – as individuals, as members of family and of the community. Remind us of your love reaching out to us in Jesus.

We remember all your people before you – those who live in other lands and distant communities. Help us to know our common relationship as your children. Help us to be concerned for their welfare, and to support the agencies which seek to help those in need.

We also remember before you that, with the coming of the Coronavirus, the world has suddenly become a much smaller place. We are all closer together and more susceptible to the disease it brings. We cannot rely on geographical distance or features to protect us. Help us to be assiduous in our adherence to the regulations put in place for our safety. Give us patience and endurance for what we are facing.

We record our grateful thanks for the work done by all associated with the NHS, emergency and essential services – including volunteers. We ask your blessing on every one of them in what is often a place of danger.

We pray for our own country – the Queen and her family; for all those who are called to positions of responsibility in all our countries – that they may be sustained and guided by you.

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We remember too that alongside the emergency many people are faced with ongoing problems of other kinds.

So, we pray for those who are ill, at home or in hospital, those anxiously concerned for themselves, or for the health and circumstances of a loved one,

be near to all those who suffer the pain of sadness and bereavement at the loss of someone they loved; and who feel lost and empty – especially having been unable to be given proper grieving and support from friends and family.

Lord God, we ask you to be present for all those who need your love and your strength. Grant them the knowledge of your never-failing love and compassion. Let them know that you are always there for them in all circumstances

Lord God, we rejoice in the lives of all those who've gone before us in faithful service. We thank you for those who have showed us your love by the love in their lives.

Inspire us by the memories we have of them so that we may serve you well and be your faithful followers.

We ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake, AMEN



CH4 356

Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity,
in perfect harmony – the man who is God:
Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity,
kneels in humility and washes our feet.

*Oh what a mystery – meekness and majesty:
bow down and worship, for this is your God,
this is your God!*

Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence,
yet learns obedience to death on a cross:
suffering to give us life, conquering through sacrifice –
and, as they crucify, prays, 'Father forgive'.

*Oh what a mystery – meekness and majesty:
bow down and worship, for this is your God,
this is your God!*

Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,
love indestructible in frailty appears:
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,
lifts our humanity to the heights of his throne.

*Oh what a mystery – meekness and majesty:
bow down and worship, for this is your God,
this is your God!*

Graham Kendrick (b 1950)

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Psalm 118:19-29 Luke 19:28-40

Psalm 118 is one of a group of Psalms used by pilgrims as they climbed up the final approaches to Jerusalem on their way to the major festivals, such as Passover. They had both a religious and a psychological function. They were used to help prepare the minds of the pilgrims for the worship and celebrations that they would be taking part in during the ensuing week leading up to Passover. They also had the psychological and practical purpose of helping to give them the rhythm that they needed to keep themselves going at this hardest part of the climb – like marching songs or tunes for soldiers on a long march.

There would be excitement present in the minds of the people – whether it was their first visit or the most recent of many. They were going to the Holy City, to the one and only Temple, and their sense of anticipation was very high. They were doing all the things we associate with a joyful crowd – some singing – some dancing – others were breaking branches off the trees and waving them about as banners in their exhilaration. Young men of 12 who were newly allowed to go to the Temple would be boisterous. The mood was buoyant and filled with hope.

There would be other things in the air as well, relating to the fact that the People of Israel were subjugated under an occupying power, Rome. In these strained times there would be depression, hatred, hope and a measure of expectancy which would turn them to reading extra meaning into the verse "*May God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord!*"

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Their minds would turn to, and latch on to, the prophecies and ideas about the coming of God's Messiah, who would be their Saviour and bring their country back to its former glory. In recent years there had been many who claimed to fulfil these prophecies and many Jews were always looking for a new person to proclaim as Messiah.

There were many factions who actively encouraged this thinking as a de-stabilising force against the Romans – and it had led to several uprisings and rebellions – which, in turn, had brought sufferings and death – but that didn't stop the people approaching Passover in a highly expectant frame of mind.

It was in the midst of such an atmosphere that Jesus approached Jerusalem with his disciples on what we now call Palm Sunday. It had been clear for some time that Jesus' Ministry was heading towards a climax. He had now been teaching his disciples for three years: Peter had made a profession of faith which encompassed the other disciples as well. Some of the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law were so incensed with Jesus' teaching that they were trying to trap him in a way which would allow them to bring him to the Romans for trial and execution.

It is clear that Jesus knew that this would be his last Passover. He knew his disciples were getting carried away with the atmosphere and were trying to encourage a show of strength from the ordinary people to "warn off" Jesus' opponents. Jesus saw dangers in this, not least that the disciples were filling their minds, and the minds of others, with the wrong kind of picture – and hope.

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They were thinking of what they, as human beings, could do in the immediate situation. Even that was futile – for Jesus knew the “power” of the ordinary people was not equal to the power of the Jewish leaders, harnessed to the help they could get from the Romans. The main problem was that the Disciples were thinking of the immediate present – in terms of Jesus’ earthly life. They had not grasped the fact that the mission of Jesus, as Messiah, was aimed at all mankind – for all time. What Jesus was going to do on God’s behalf was important for the whole future of mankind. What he was doing, and trying to say, was concerned with eternity – not just the next few hours or days.

Jesus knew and accepted that he could not stop the euphoria and excitement of that particular occasion – though he knew it would not stand the pressure of the days and circumstances that were to follow. So, he set about giving them a picture – a significant picture – that would stay in their minds long after the words and feelings of that day had melted away.

He made his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, relying on the symbolism to dawn on their minds at a later time. The old symbolism was quite simple. When a king was visiting a neighbouring country, he declared his intentions by the way he travelled. If he came on horseback it was a sign that he came as an overlord or conqueror. If he came on the back of a donkey, he was declaring that he was coming in peace.

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So, Jesus was giving the clear message that he was in no way a warrior Messiah coming to overthrow the Romans by military power. His Messiahship had to do with peace and taking over the hearts and minds of people in a way which depended on love and care. We have to lay aside the triumphalism that we **could** draw out of Palm Sunday – apart from anything else we **know** the reality of Good Friday!

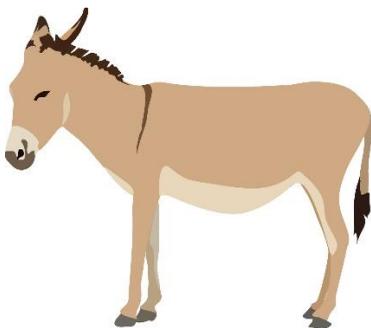
However, we can resolve that we will open up our hearts and minds for Jesus to enter them as he did Jerusalem.

We can also draw on all the sense of wonder, excitement, joy and happiness that pervaded the crowd – and make it part of our worship of Jesus and God – at all times.

We can take for ourselves the message of peace and humility he was expressing by riding on a donkey.

We have every right to use all our senses in our living and our worship of God. AMEN

May God bless our meditation on his Word.



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CH4 365

1 Ride on! ride on in majesty!
Hark! all the tribes 'Hosanna!' cry;
O Saviour meek, pursue thy road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

2 Ride on! ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.

3 Ride on! ride on in majesty!
The winged squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.

4 Ride on! ride on in majesty!
Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;
the Father on his sapphire throne
awaits his own anointed Son.

5 Ride on! ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
bow thy meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, thy power, and reign.

Benediction. Go in peace,
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and Fellowship in the Holy Spirit, be with us all **AMEN**

CH4 786 May the God of peace go with us
as we travel from this place;
may the love of Jesus keep us
firm in hope and full of grace. Tune: Ae fond kiss