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# PALM SUNDAY

5 April, 2020

*Rejoice greatly,  
Daughter Zion!*

*Shout!  
Daughter Jerusalem!*

*Look! See!*

*Your King comes to you,  
righteous and victorious,  
lowly and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

*Zechariah 9:9*





## Welcome to Palm Sunday at Botley Baptist Church!

*We are not able to stream our worship service, but will try and make this time of worship special for you. Read it at your pace, sing along when you feel like it, pause when you feel the need to, and read the prayers as if they were your own.*

**Click on any text in RED. The music/hymn will open on YouTube. When it finishes, shut down YouTube and return to this. If this is not possible, please sing the hymns *a cappella*, or read it as poetry. Our Great God enjoys our worship!**

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### OPENING WORSHIP MUSIC

*“Hosanna! Son of David”*

**REFLECT** It's mid-morning. The dust is beginning to rise with the heat. The event-planners missed a beat that day and fell out over a handsome reward, but that's the way it is with God! He plans everything down to the last detail. Unless we are walking and talking with Him up close, even then who knows what God has planned! Every wonder why?

**Pause and consider this: being the Loving, Caring and Giving Father He is, God does not want us to **DO** anything! He wants us to marvel and to wonder in awe, at His great works around us, and gaze at His Majesty! That's it!**

**PRAYER** Loving Father! Awesome God! We fall for the attractions of this world, unaware of the sorrow it inflicts on us, and causes You, yet You care for our salvation! Forgive us for not worshipping You with reverence and fear. Accept this our confession, in the Name of Jesus our Christ. **AMEN.**





## **HYMN**

**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  
and David's Royal Son!  
now in the Lord's name coming  
the King and Blessed One.
2. The company of angels,  
are praising you on high;  
and mortal men and all things  
created make reply.
3. The people of the Hebrews  
with palms before you went  
our praise and prayer and anthems  
before you we present.
4. To you before your passion  
they sang their hymns of praise;  
to Thee, now high exalted  
our melody we raise.
5. Thou didst accept their praises  
accept the prayers we bring  
who in all good delightest  
O good and gracious King!

*Psalter Hymnal, (Gray)*

## **PRAYER**

Our God, whose Majesty cannot be described.  
You are the Creator of the Donkey, yet you  
humbled Yourself by riding on Him in Splendour  
and Majesty. I am blessed by Your humility and  
raise my voice to join the Angels praising You  
continually!

Father! Nothing will distract me from  
worshipping You this glorious day. I rejoice in  
the memory of Jesus' calm dignity as He rode  
into Jerusalem, knowing what lay ahead.

**AMEN.**





## SCRIPTURE READING

### John 12:12-19 and 25-26

“The huge crowd that had arrived for the Passover 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 called for 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!* (Zechariah 9:9)

The disciples didn't notice the fulfilment 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.

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 of raising Lazarus, that the crowd swelled to a welcoming parade. The Pharisees took one look at what was happening and threw up their hands: *“It's out of control. The world's in a stampede after Him.”*

During a verbal exchange Jesus said to the crowd,

*“Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honour anyone who serves me.”*

Praise God for those who remembered the events accurately, so that God's word remains as always, perfect and true! **AMEN**





## MESSAGE

John's gospel provides us with the most detail of the day we call Palm Sunday.

The narrative is well known: Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey not a horse, and is given a King's reception, "***Hosanna! Here comes the King of the Jews!***"

The destruction of human life caused by the COVID-19 virus is crushing very ounce of human wisdom. We mapped our DNA, explained global warming, cured diseases, and advances in alternate energy may enable us to continue our lifestyle, but the human race has been brought to its knees by a very intelligent organism, who can hide itself, and whose behaviour cannot be predicted!

The statement "we are being guided by the science..." is a statement of defeat: all we have to go on are the statistics **after the fact**, which means, we have yet to get abreast of, before getting ahead of this virus, to stop it!

Yet through this devastation, stories emerge from all over the world, of acts of kindness, of deeds of help, of families reuniting around the kitchen table. Added to this are reports of fading levels of pollution which has cleared the horizon and exposed views not seen in half a century! I received a video clip of deer frolicking in softly crashing waves on a seashore which used to be crowded with sun-worshippers, drawing responses that nature is returning to its natural state without humans!

In the midst of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, a group of foreigners are eager to "meet Jesus". We are well advised to heed His reply: (v.25) *Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.*

The phrase highlighted above refers to the nucleus of that which motivates us.

(cont'd ../...)







In the midst of global devastation, there is a race among organisations to be the first to find an antidote to contain this virus. The big prize? Being the first to market a cure!

Jesus' words "*in this world*" refers to this self-serving, self-centred-life: what we do may benefit the human race, but what drives us is the honour of "being the first".

This is the "sinful nature" the Bible talks about, that everything we do is driven by the energy of "the flesh" (an old translation), which refers to self-centred living and a self-gratifying life. We hear of wonderful deeds of exemplary service, but deep inside is the feeling, *It felt good doing that!*

People love because they want the other's love in return; people forgive because it feels good to let the other know how grateful they should be (*I have forgiven you!*); people give clothing because it doesn't fit them, or look good on them any more, so let someone else have it, and having given it away, or done the good deed, they feel better about themselves.

So much of our fundraising for causes, feeds the impulses of "the flesh", always self-directed - you don't know whose life is changed, but giving makes you feel good.

Jesus' caution? *Those who love their life in this world will lose it. People whose inbred motivation is to help their neighbour because "it feels good", will not find their place in the Kingdom of God.*

We can be differently motivated: to consciously turn from the accolades the world gives, and to intentionally seek direction of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is charged to do God's will, to implement God's perfect plan.

Jesus says it quite plainly, *Those who turn their back on the accolades of this world, are those whose heart, mind and soul are focussed on doing what the Father wants, are doing the*





*work of God's Kingdom here and now, and the Father will gladly welcome them to His home!*

The Greeks in Jerusalem wanted to know, "Where are You going, Jesus?"

"I am going to Jerusalem to die!", He replied.

"Spare us! We did not come here to watch You die, Jesus! We heard wonderful things about You and followed to see You crowned King!"

*"O! NO! If you follow me to the cross, you must do as do, come to die to yourself, because only through death comes life! A grain of wheat has to die in the soil before it produces a harvest of grain."*

To the crowds following Him, to the Greeks who wanted to meet Him, and to us today Jesus says, *You want to follow me, then when you do acts of kindness, good deeds of help, offer gifts to help the poor, don't do it to feel good, even when everyone says, "How great you are!" Turn your back on all this!*

*Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to do acts of kindness, good deeds, offer help to the poor, and your satisfaction will be in our obedience to the Will of God!*

In closing, consider this: Florence Nightingale did not serve dying soldiers during the Crimean War in order to become a by-word in nursing excellence; the vision of a 4,000-bed hospital to be named in her honour was never in her imagination. Sailing up the Nile in January 1850, on reaching Thebes, she wrote of being "called to God". A week later near Cairo she wrote in her diary (not her longer letters): *"God called me in the morning and asked me would I do good for Him alone, without reputation."*

May this motivation override any and every other, that as we seek opportunities to *"love our neighbour as ourselves"*, to be a good Samaritan for those fallen by the roadside, we would do all *for Him alone, without reputation. AMEN.*

**If you cannot play the next hymn by clicking on the title, please sing it or read it and consider the words.**





## Just A Closer Walk With Thee

I am weak but Thou art strong  
Jesus keep me from all wrong  
I'll be satisfied as long  
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee

Just a closer walk with Thee  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea  
Daily walking close to Thee  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be

When my feeble life is o'er  
Time for me will be no more  
Guide me gently, safely o'er  
To Thy kingdom's shore, to Thy shore

Just a closer walk with Thee  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea  
Daily walking close to Thee  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

*Just A Closer Walk With Thee lyrics © Sony/  
ATV Music Publishing LLC*

## **BENEDICTION**

Blessed is the One who rode into Jerusalem  
Blessed is the One who is coming in Majesty!  
Blessed is the One who calls you to follow Him  
Blessed are you who respond to His call!

Walk closer, listen carefully and obey diligently  
Your Father in Heaven as He prepares you for  
Eternity with Him!

**AMEN**

