



Church in a Bag

Sunday 28 March

Dubbo Uniting Church



A Gathering

Let us enter the city of God today
and shout hosanna to our King.
Let us join the walk toward freedom
and follow Christ's path to wholeness.
Let our hearts ache for justice and
mercy
and weep for peace and freedom.
Let us turn our backs
on the powers that grasp for control
and follow the one who brings life.
Let us walk in solidarity
with the abandoned and oppressed
and welcome the broken and the sick.
Let us touch and see as God draws near.
Riding in triumph toward the Cross.



(Christine Sine godspace-msa.com)

Preparation

Take a few moments to think on the following. It's a normal day, but it's about to change. Jesus is headed your way.

- Would you have a cloak, a palm, or something else from your house or garden to lay down or wave?
- Would you make a poster with the word Hosanna (or maybe you'd use a more modern word)?
- Would you raise a flag – which flag would it be?
- Or would you stay inside and just look through the window as an observer rather than a participant?

Readings: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

John 12:12-16 (we have used The Message for our inspiration today)

Reflection

Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures on Palm Sunday is recorded in all four New Testament Gospel Accounts.

The Jewish people had been waiting for centuries for the Messiah – someone to save them. They had definite ideas of what he would be like, and Jesus doesn't quite fit them. He says and does some fascinating things, but this procession into Jerusalem is all wrong. A king doesn't arrive on a donkey but on a horse to demonstrate power and strength. The crowd with Jesus, however, is convinced He is the one and is in a celebratory mood.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem there would have been many other preachers, teachers, and healers, all looking to gain attention and acknowledgment. Somehow it is Jesus who attracted the crowds to him with much enthusiasm. We can make some informed or intuitive guesses why this occurred but we weren't there! We can ask though - how do people see Jesus today?

Some people may say that he was a good person from history. Some may consider Jesus as a celebrity from the past. The story of his miraculous raising of Lazarus from the dead was certainly known to some when Jesus entered Jerusalem and they wanted to treat Him like a king.

When Jesus came, He was humble and courageous. A servant king, whose glory was seen when He laid down His life on the cross. But what do we believe – how do we see Jesus?

The Psalm reading today was, in Jewish tradition, one of the songs of praise. Jesus and his disciples most likely sang part of Psalm 118 'the hymn' at their last Passover meal together.



There is reference to a Capstone which literally means “head of the corner”: either a capstone over a door or a large stone used to anchor, align the corner of a wall, or the keystone of an arch.

“This stone, disdained by the worldly powers, has become the most important stone in the structure of the new world order that God is bringing about through Israel.” Jesus applied this verse to himself - “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone”. Luke 20:17

What was Jesus telling those present? That the prophecies had come true. That HE was the pivotal one to hold up the metaphorical temple. That He was here as promised to lead the Jewish people into the future.

What convinces you that Jesus is the Messiah?

Included today in your Church in a Bag is Bruce Prewer’s poem “The Arrival”. It talks of opportunity knocking (sometimes) but also of missed opportunities.

This Palm Sunday reflect on what may hold you back? Ask yourself what would you give up in celebration?

*This Palm Sunday
will you choose to be an observer staying on the perimeter
or will you be an active participant?*



A song to sing or to read: Ride On Ride On

Ride on, ride on in majesty
hark, all the tribes hosanna cry!
O Saviour, meek, pursue your road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty
in lowly pomp ride on to die.
O Christ, your triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sing.

Ride on, ride on in majesty
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh.
The Father on his sapphire throne
awaits his own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty
in lowly pomp ride on to die.
Bow your meek head to mortal pain
then take, O God, your power and reign!



Music and lyrics in the Public Domain

Closing Prayer

Go gladly on your way as those who have recognised the Palm Sunday man as the key to the healing of the world. Translate your hosannas into your language of daily loving, so that each task and each person you meet may receive the best that you can offer in those circumstances.

Hosanna! Wonderful is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

May the amazing grace of Christ Jesus cover you.

May the enduring love of God encircle you.

And may the sure friendship of the Holy Spirit inspire you.

For today and evermore. **Amen!**

(Paraphrased from Bruce Prewer)

With thanks to Anne Vail and Raelene Burn for preparing today's reflection



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