



The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale

'Church in the Home'

Edition 3

Palm Sunday into Holy Week: April 5th – April 11th 2020

We are used to Palm Sunday signalling the start of the Easter holiday season when the Dale opens its arms of welcome to crowds of visitors. Things are rather different this year .. and yet; things also remain timelessly the same.

Our reading from Matthew reminds us of the noise and bustle in Jerusalem at that time when Jews from all over the known world gathered to celebrate the feast of the Passover. One contemporary census estimated over 2 million people squeezed into the crowded narrow streets of the city. Into this heaving pot of humanity arrives **Jesus** with the shouts and cheers of an excited crowd who have heard of, and perhaps seen, the incredible things that he has been doing and hold their own hopes of what he will do next. What *does* happen next takes everyone by surprise, except Jesus as he fulfils his destiny and purpose, paying the ransom for our spiritual freedom with his own life, that we might find a way back to a restored relationship with God himself. But for now, the crowd welcomes Jesus.

It's sobering to look again at how quickly the mood can change when surrounded by one particular message. Those opposed to Jesus quickly circulate lies and 'fake news' and violent opposition grows to a message of love and salvation. For us, with 24 hr news available on the virus crisis, our mood could swiftly become rather dark, but the timeless message across the millennia is one of **HOPE** and it is to that, that I recommend we direct our attention afresh or perhaps for the very first time.

Our world may look and feel very different for us all right now, but the message and the hope that is in Jesus Christ still remains the same and billions of Christians alive right now testify to the life changing experience that there is in welcoming Jesus into their lives.

May God bless you with his Life, his Love and his Hope as you do so.

Rev Dave



All Glory, Laud and Honour

Music thoughts
from Sarah

This old traditional hymn is full of **PURE PRAISE** and is used widely on Palm Sunday. It speaks of men and angels and children yesterday now and forever, with the heritage of the saints *all* bringing our Praises before our redeemer King *before* his Passion and *after* his resurrection.

The language may be dated, but praise is always relevant.

<https://youtu.be/pHN8Uak6Yow>

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

Thou art the King of Israel,
thou David's royal Son,
who in the Lord's Name comest,
the King and Blessed One.

The company of angels
are praising thee on high;
and mortal men and all things
created make reply.

The people of the Hebrews
with palms before thee went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before thee we present.

To thee before thy passion
they sang their hymns of praise;
to thee, now high exalted,
our melody we raise.

Thou didst accept their praises;
accept the prayers we bring,
who in all good delightest,
thou good and gracious King.

Come people of the Risen King

This hymn is quite new to us but one we have been using at our Gathering services. It's particularly good for today as we gather together at the same time, but not in the same building. I love the way it welcomes us all. Young, old, joyful and weeping. **All of us**, together to praise our King and rejoice in him like they did on that first Palm Sunday! It speaks of turning away from the shadows and looking to God for hope and truth.

Come, people of the risen King,
Who delight to bring Him praise.
Come, all and tune your hearts to sing
To the Morning Star of grace.
From the shifting shadows of the earth
We will lift our eyes to Him,
Where steady arms of mercy reach
To gather children in.

*Rejoice! Rejoice!
Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice,
O Church of Christ, rejoice!*

Come, those whose joy is morning sun
And those weeping through the night.
Come, those who tell of battles won,
And those struggling in the fight.
For His perfect love will never change,
And His mercies never cease,
But follow us through all our days
With the certain hope of peace.

*Rejoice! Rejoice!
Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice,
O Church of Christ, rejoice!*

Come, young and old from every land,
Men and women of the faith.
Come, those with full or empty hands,
Find the riches of His grace.
Over all the world, His people sing,
Shore to shore we hear them call
The Truth that cries through every age;
'Our God is all in all'.

Rejoice! Rejoice! ...

Keith and Kristyn Getty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNIP8Sy23XE>



Bible Readings for Palm Sunday:

Is 50:4-9a, Psalm 118 v1-2,19-29, Phil 2.5-11, Matthew 21 v1-11

If you prefer to listen to the readings click on this site and type in the reading you want and listen to David Suchet read it to you.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/suchet/nivuk/Gen.1>

Reflection

Last Thursday at 8pm we were invited to stand at the door of our houses and clap the NHS staff who are working so bravely for us all. One of my sisters said it was immensely moving in her street:- everyone cheering, clapping, banging saucepans, even letting off fireworks.

It was the nearest thing we are allowed at the moment to being together in a crowd. Jesus was in a cheering crowd on Palm Sunday. He was surrounded by people coming down from the north to celebrate the greatest feast of their year. It must have been full of happy memories for Jesus. He'd been coming to the Passover Festival with family and friends since his childhood.

Each year they would have been singing the familiar Passover songs including Psalm 118, 'Save us Lord (Hebrew = Hosanna) and 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord'.

But this year it took on new meaning. The crowd was focused on Jesus. As they came to the brow of the hill looking down on Jerusalem, Jesus had mounted a donkey. What could be clearer? They knew the prophecy about the king coming humbly riding on a donkey. They had been hoping that Jesus is that promised Messiah, Son of David. Now his action signals that he is. They responded, spreading cloaks, and palm branches, repeating the shout of Hosanna. It must have been a moment of wonderful joy for the disciples who had trusted this Jesus from the first. Surely now at last all will go well and his reign will be revealed!

But their trust in him is going to be severely tested in the week ahead. Of course they would have known it was not going to be easy. They could not have expected the regime in Jerusalem to give way to Jesus without a fight. But things did not work out at all as they expected. Jesus did not lead a rebellion and take control of Jerusalem. He was the one who seemed to give way without a fight. He waited quietly in a garden at night while one of his own betrayed him and handed him over to be tortured and killed. As Philippians puts it, he did not exploit his equality with God but humbled himself and became obedient to death on a cross.

God's way of doing things is very different from ours. If we think the road ahead of us is clear and predictable we are wrong. If we think we know what is best for us and those we love, we may soon discover that God does not agree.

Try this experiment. Look back on your life to some of the moments when everything was going well and you thought you had a clear view of what was going to happen next. You were looking forward to the way ahead and everything seemed to be under your control. Then quite suddenly it was as if there was a landslide. The road ahead was blocked and you had to adjust to quite different circumstances. Your life changed direction

Choose one such memory and then ask, '*Where was God for me at that time?*' Did your trust in him waver? What happened? What gifts did God give you as you followed him along a different path from the one you were expecting? It can be a great encouragement to faith in the present to remind ourselves how God has used our disappointments and setbacks in the past to make us more resilient or humble or caring or thankful.

Today we are all together in one of those road block situations which is altering our lives in the short term and maybe the long term. The cheering and banging on Thursday night was not really a joyful celebration. It was a thank you to the people who are risking their own lives to save others in danger. We stand with them, we pray for them, we encourage them and we let them give us courage to face the dangers around us and to do what we can for others.

Most of all, however, we who are disciples of Jesus Christ, take our encouragement from trusting in him. As we approach Holy Week we are invited to walk with him through his trials and suffering. We see ourselves exposed in the boasting and the falling asleep, the denials, the running away. But also we see ourselves loved and forgiven in the washing of feet and the sharing of broken bread and wine poured out.

And each year we find new depths in our understanding of what it means that God's own Son gave his life for me and for the world.

Rev Vera Sinton



Television and Radio: Sunday Broadcasts

Radio 4: 8:10am Morning Worship

BBC1 10:45am Sunday Worship & Songs of Praise 1:15pm

Prayers



Holy and life giving God, we give thanks for the beauty of your creation at this time of new birth and renewal. The fields are filled with lambs, the grass is turning greener and the hedges and trees starting to bud. We pray for our farmers in this busy time in the farming year.

Forgiving Lord, we give thanks that whatever the sin, when we come before you seeking forgiveness, we are washed clean.

We are truly sorry Lord for the things that we have done wrong throughout this week – if we have not put our trust in you, or lifted the burdens of our worries to you in faith; for the times we have not loved our neighbour as you have taught us; for times we have put our own needs before those of others. Let us follow your lead Lord, safe in the knowledge that we are on the right path when we walk in your footsteps.

Holy God, we pray for those who lead and guide us during these difficult days. For Dave & Sarah in our Benefice, for their love and constancy, for Bishop's Helen-Ann & Nick in the Diocese and for the senior leaders of our church, for the messages from Justin Welby. May we listen and hear your comforting words through them, finding our way alongside you. May we read and absorb your word through the bible, psalms and prayer and find comfort in the messages that are there for us to read.

As we live through these extraordinary times, let us remember that, when we walk with the Lord, we are never alone. He is always with us, his hand always in ours. There are bound to be times when we feel lonely, anxious or afraid, whether it be through uncertainty, financial strain, not being able to see family or friends. Whatever the reason, let us remember to ask for help and not to suffer mental anguish on our own.

As we go forward into this new week, let us do so with the light of God's love shining from us, so that others may see the joy and comfort of a life lived in Him. Let us pray often and deeply for the safe keeping of all those we love, for all God's children.

Elizabeth Fawcett

Merciful Father, accept these prayers, for the sake of your son, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Visit our Website for more information, resources and messages www.upperwensleydalechurch.co.uk

'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and grant you peace.' Numbers 6:24