

Worship@Home Sunday 5th April 2020

Like what was offered last week, this is an offering for you to pick up and have a time of worship at home. It is based around a usual Sunday service for you to participate in as much as you can. Speak out loud, speak within your heart, sing aloud, sing within your heart – pray out loud, pray inside – just join in 😊

If you wanted to keep to our community's regular rhythm of worship, then you are invited to use it as a devotional on Sunday morning starting at 9:30 am.

Welcome to worship on "Psalm Sunday"

Call to worship: From Psalm 118

One: Let us give thanks to God, for God is good.

All: God's love lasts forever.

One: Let all the people proclaim it aloud:

All: God's love lasts forever.

One: Come, let us worship God, let us pray:

Opening prayer: Hosanna Saviour, we wave our palms and sing our praise as we remember your triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As we gather in spirit, may your Spirit lift our hearts, minds and souls in worship to you. May your Spirit enter the heart of our worship this day giving us the strength to endure the journey which is ahead. Amen.

Music: "Ride On, Ride On, in Majesty" WOV # 264

by Henry H. Milman, 1791-1868

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 angel armies 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
Expects 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 Christ, Thy power and reign.

Prayer of Confession: Read these words from Psalm 36:1–4:

Scripture taken from the Good News Translation— Second Edition © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.

'Sin speaks to the wicked deep in their hearts; they reject God and do not have reverence for him.

Because they think so highly of themselves, they think that God will not discover their sin and condemn it.

Their speech is wicked and full of lies; they no longer do what is wise and good.

They make evil plans as they lie in bed; nothing they do is good, and they never reject anything evil.'

Make time for silent reflection on these ancient words and confession for all that is revealed for you.

Words of affirmation

God, 'your constant love reaches the heavens; your faithfulness extends to the skies. Your righteousness is towering like the mountains; your justice is like the depths of the sea. People and animals are in your care.

How precious, O God, is your constant love!

We find protection under the shadow of your wings.

We feast on the abundant food you provide; you let us drink from the river of your goodness.

You are the source of all life, and because of your light we see the light.'

Thanks be to God. Amen

Scriptures for today: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 and Matthew 21:1-11

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. 2 Let Israel say: "His love endures forever."

19 Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD. 20 This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter. 21 I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. 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. 28 You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. 29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Amen

Matthew 21:1-11 Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." 4 This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" 6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" 10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" 11 The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." Amen

Thoughts for Reflection: 'Psalm Sunday'

Lectio Divina is a traditional form of Bible Study (reading, meditation and prayer) and one part of it is to read the particular passage under study to see if any word or phrase 'stands' out. I had only begun as I was reading the Matthew passage for this week, when in verse 10, I became aware of the words **"the whole city was stirred."** Jerusalem was stirring... All of Jerusalem – *according to Matthew* was stirred.

Something was happening – what? For them it was the annual celebration of Passover, so what was different? I can't help almost immediately identify with our cities thrown into turmoil. Our **world** is stirred like it never has been before, at this year's Passover / Easter annual event.



Question: Can you think of any other single 'thing' that has had every country stirred up? I immediately began to think how Covid-19 has stirred our world up so much, will it ever be the same? I can't think anything else, except for Christianity maybe, but is it stirring enough in most countries around the world, like Covid-19 currently is?

In Jesus world it was Passover, the celebration of their people's **escape from Egypt**. This includes such memories as: The actual escape from Egypt when the angel of death passed over all homes to kill the first born of all. However, because all Hebrew homes were protected by the lamb's blood on the door lintels, they were saved, while all others (Egyptians) were not. Their chase by the Egyptian army; God's evening deliveries of meat, morning deliveries of manna to feed them, God's supply of water from rocks, God's protection visible as clouds and fiery pillars; the escape from slavery, of being oppressed, of discovering self-autonomy, finding freedom, discovering the faith-covenant anew and their ever present, powerful God. Oh yes Jerusalem city was stirring with the 50 000+ locals were preparing for the flood of 200 000+ extra pilgrim's arriving. The whole city from the smallest market gardener to the largest retailer not to mention the hospitality industry, yes, the city was stirred – up!

Question: Think of the differences and consequences of how our city / country is currently stirred up? Churches? Accommodation industry? Food and retail outlets? Hospitals? Maybe try expanding who might be finding themselves on the front line more than usual: Funeral Home / Directors / Carers, Mental Health Workers, Supermarket staff, police, all those deemed 'essential workers'?

In Jesus day, Passover celebration was more than just fun, as it meant other currents (political) also influencing the city's mood. Because of Passover, the city, the heart place of Jewish faith, meant the presence of thousands more members of Rome's army. The legionnaires on their horses; foot soldiers armour clanking as they marched to the drumbeats; the huge figures of the gold sparkling Imperial eagles; company banners flapping on their standards; camp followers and all those tents... The army marched overland from the west and was designed to be a display of Roman imperial power, Roman theological power, with all the gods of Rome marched into Jerusalem. Whose god held the power, the drumbeats asked. This army marched into Jerusalem for Passover *'to keep the peace'*! Yes, the city was stirred.

Question: In our current crisis what gods can you think of, that are on display or being challenged? What about our God? How might this crisis impact Christianity, our churches, our own faith community?



In Jesus day, Passover meant *all those pilgrims*, walking up to the city. And one of the customs as they marched was to sing some of the psalms from their scriptures, including Psalm 118. The crowd with Jesus has enough power of its own to stir a city without any of the other things going on.



Psalm 118 is one of celebration and thanksgiving because of a victory won. We aren't sure any more just which war-victory or even which King, but it is a victory celebration. Jesus's ¹*Jerusalem was under the brutal yoke of a foreign power; the Temple staff corrupt and in cahoots with it. Jesus is proclaimed Lord, as he enters the city and his crowd chant this psalm.

Psalm 118 is a ²*liturgical/ church conversation between the KING and people. Verse 2 'Let Israel say...' and then verse 19 'Open for me'... verse 23 is back to the people' it is marvellous in our eyes'... It swaps in and out as it is a conversation about God's presence in their lives of their successful warfare and future – and all because God is love. Chanting and using symbols from their scripture (2 Kings 9:13), where strewing cloaks onto the path while others were cutting down branches from the trees and were spreading in the way all as a sign of royal homage. The claims of a King are obvious; the claims of a victorious king are inferred; but are the celebrations of / for a righteous **king of love**?

Our story tells us that Jesus deliberately chose to enter Jerusalem for this Passover. He engages the two disciples to go into the village and, as soon as they get there, they "will find a donkey tied and a colt with her." They are to take this donkey and colt. If anyone were to ask them about it, they are to give the "secret password" and say, "The Lord has need of them." And as he rides in, the city is stirred.

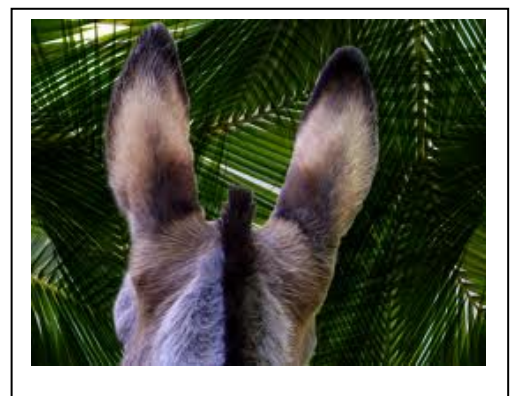


The Passover city asks: 'Who is this?' The crowds call him a prophet despite all the 'Kingly' add-ons! Placing him on the donkey (and colt), casting garments and palm branches before him, and telling "the daughter of Zion," (Jerusalem), of he who comes in love and peace from God.

Question: Who is Jesus for you? Who is Jesus for the world? Is this year different to past years? Does the reflection of a King of love riding into a city in turmoil, help you find assurance for today?

This Passover Easter we too be stirred – shaken – shocked with what is happening around us. May we find the courage to stay with Jesus through the turmoil, political winds, stirred emotions to be like him for our community. Like him we have no promises of not being caught up with what is happening around us. For us though, it's all about doing our best to keep everyone safe and avoiding catching of Covid-19; or maybe having to watch loved ones with it.

Ours is a calling to follow him – despite all the winds of discord, change, turmoil and fear that are around us. Ours the challenge to trust that Jesus was right, God does know what is happening, and loves us in this life and into the next.



Prayers for the World and Others: Make a list from the news you have been listening to... and obviously Covid-19 and its consequences is significant at this time. Try to think about less obvious 'essential' services workers who put their lives at risk, caring for us all. Make a list of family and friends that are on your heart in these times. Make a list of the international concerns on your heart. Share your regular concerns. Wrap all these into an offering to the Lord of all these.... Amen

Music: All glory, praise and honour, WOV #250

[Translator: J. M. Neale \(1854\); Author: Theodulf, Bishop of Orléans \(c. 820\)](#)

Chorus:

All glory, praise and honour,
To Thee, Redeemer, King,
To Whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring.

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

2. The company of angels
Are praising Thee on High,
And mortal's and all things
Created make reply.

3. The people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went;
Our prayer and praise and anthems
Before Thee we present.

4. To Thee before thy 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,
Thou good and gracious King.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, our God,
We leave this time in limbo, not sure how to feel, so much more than usual is going on.
We leave today knowing that our faith story about Jesus is not finished.
We leave today knowing that Jesus was betrayed and denied and yet...

We leave today knowing that just as God never let Jesus story end in eternal death, neither will ours.
We leave placing ourselves, loves, worries and fears in God's loving, generous, and merciful hands, again.

We leave knowing despite a sense of being on our own – we are not.

We leave trusting how the eternal love of God keeps us in community with a sunrise happening again tomorrow morning. **Amen.**

Music to close: Now Unto Him

Now unto Him who is able to keep,
Able to keep you from falling.
And present you faultless
Before the Presence of His Glory
With exceeding joy.

To the only wise God our Saviour
Be glory and majesty,
dominion and power,
both now and forever. Amen