

Good Morning, and welcome to our on-line service on Palm Sunday.

Our worship is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him for leading us, and look to a greater understanding of God's message for us.

In respect to Holy Week, there are meditations and services planned for each day which will be live streamed. Please see this week's order of service for the details. I would draw special attention to the Maundy Thursday service which will be coming from Tyndale at 7.30pm.

Our Zoom coffee shop will take place as usual on Tuesday morning at 11.00am with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

An Easter display has been put together in the front porch of the church. Please take an opportunity to stop by the church and look at it if you are passing.

For your information Tyndale will re-open for morning services from the 18<sup>th</sup> April, assuming that the current road map out of lockdown has not changed.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Rachel our Community Minister as she continues her recuperation at home.

his service is followed by a time together but apart. Please join us if you are not in the garden preparing it for the extra visitors allowed tomorrow. Thank you.

### Welcome

Welcome once again to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church, from the church, on this Palm Sunday – for years it has been the day when we have tried in our faltering way to enter into the experience of fickle followers who hailed the coming of the King, only for a few days later to deny, betray and abandon Jesus to his fate.

The judgement of the church, said one writer referring to Good Friday in particular, is that it only manages to stand looking on as Jesus dies.

Today reminds us of who we are as much as it puts who *He* is at the centre. We may call him King today; we may worship him as Lord, acknowledge him as God, come over all joyful at the prospect of a procession into Jerusalem with palm branches, donkeys, hosanna and all the rest – and pour scorn on the authorities that looked down from the ramparts and plotted to arrest the trouble-maker soon after. But how easily, too quickly, we turn to God-bothering again; to the bigging up of our religion, to all the trappings and accoutrements that cling to the ways of religion in a naughty world.

Never forget who walked with Jesus into Jerusalem – the likes of us, easily excited and seduced by the ways of the world, and just as easily running scared when the ways of that world require us to stand with the One who those ways would destroy.

Yet above everything else, perhaps, forgiveness hangs over today. Palm Sunday exposes our weaknesses and reminds us that the One who rode into Jerusalem endures much – everything – in order to make the forgiveness of God real. This is a joyful day, but shadowed; yet the joy remains after the shadows of Holy Week have passed. It is the joy of Easter, of course, in which the forgiveness of God for the sins of the world brings new life for all.

And although, this year, we can't 'enter in' to the spirit of Palm Sunday by *actually* processing round the outside of the building we can, perhaps in our hearts, echo the movements of the day – it is a movement from Galilee to Jerusalem, from calm towards turmoil, from what makes us safe towards what makes us vulnerable. In days when protest and procession and, indeed, *suppression* are much in the news; it is a day that recognises that to get from where and what we are to where God wants us to be and what God wants us to be involves movement, risk, vulnerability and ultimately sacrifice

But we can only make such a movement if we are compelled and *called*; which is the only way, we believe, we can come to worship.

['Travelling the road to freedom'](#)

John Bell & Graham Maule  
Ferry Hill Parish Church virtual choir

### CALL TO WORSHIP

**Leader** The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it;

**All** for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.

**Leader** Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?

**All** Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully.

**Leader** They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from the God of their salvation.

**All** Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

**Leader** Lift up your heads, O gates! & be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in.

**All** Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong & mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle.

**Leader** Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in.

**All** Who is this King of glory?

**Leader** The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.

**BPW 216 [All Glory Laud and Honour](#)**

**Opening Prayer**

Re rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!  
 Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he,

Lord, the ancient words of the prophet ring in our ears as we rejoice today – at this earthly sign of the coming of the King; we rejoice and worship you for Jesus our King; the humble Galilean; we praise you for the echoes of heavenly praise in the palm branches and the cries of ‘hosanna’; we thank you that ordinary men and women started to welcome the King and his kingdom; we’re glad that the procession promised purity; that in the cries we hear the sounds of justice and peace

But, Lord, we recognise that soon the echoes died away just as so often do hopes of justice and peace as the values of the world gather round, and human frailty and fickleness followed Jesus into the city and dogged his last days – and we crave forgiveness as we watch as those like us betrayed and abandoned until, at the last, Jesus faced his death alone – and cried, at the very last, ‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do’

Lord, often we do not know what we do when we allow injustice to spread abroad and turn a blind eye to destruction – and we confess that sometimes we do know, as we neglect what is good and right and true – we pause in quiet

‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do’ Lord, we take those words to ourselves as once, again, hope springs in our hearts and we believe again in your grace and forgiving power and we prepare to follow Jesus this and every day.

Lord, we rejoice, and we look, through the glories and frailties of this day, to the coming of your Kingdom. -

**Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

**Readings**

[Isaiah 50:4-9a](#)

[Mark 11:1-11](#)

**["Ride On, Ride On, The Time Is Right"](#)**

John Bell and Graham Maule

**Sermon**

*Lord we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard and understood be touched by your spirit and may what is decided lead us all on towards your Kingdom.*

We hear much these days, of protest, procession and suppression. We are appalled as peaceful protest descends into violence on a Bristol street; we recoil in horror as protestors in Myanmar are shot dead by state forces.

We recognise the power of procession, we acknowledge the need for control and order; we are glad of laws and forces that protect us; we know deep in our hearts that sometimes the usual channels to effect change dry up and protests break out; we’ve heard tell of the Peterloo massacre, the Tolpuddle martyrs, the Pankhursts, Selma, Alabama, Rosa Parkes, CND marches, the Bristol bus boycott, the Arab spring, Hong Kong..so many others..

In our world we know that sometimes protests have been met with suppression, that sometimes peaceful processions have been hijacked; we're glad for rebellions in earlier times that have won freedoms for us; we're wary of trouble on the streets; we know there has to be state power; we wish with all our hearts that security forces and political powers would always do the right –

All these things swirl around this Palm Sunday, as Jesus rides into Jerusalem - an ancient religious procession, from the days when there was little distinction between religious righteousness and state righteousness; when the people gathered outside the gates ahead of a festival and called out, 'who may ascend the hill of the Lord?'

and a Priest standing at the gate replied 'those who have clean hands and a pure heart' – and then they processed into the city – and maybe the King, the representative of God, was there, 'blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' – and for a time, for another year, God was on his throne and all was right in Israel.

and maybe in Jesus' day the heart of the procession meant the same thing – only now the Priests were skulking in the temple, Roman soldiers stood at the gates – no longer 'are your hands clean and your hearts pure as you ascend the hill?' but now 'are those *protesters* ascending the hill?'; and now, religious people banging on about purity was one thing; politics, power, Pilate in his palace with soldiers guaranteeing his power – they were something else.

And maybe Jesus, with his little band, was subverting it all; maybe for them it wasn't just religion; maybe they really did think that their protest and procession were necessary steps on the road to freedom

Except that Jesus seemed to know that across that road lay a cross. That's the problem, often, these days, with protests; they're full of people shouting 'what do we want and when do we want it?' – and the politicians are pressured to give the loudest voices what they want – and that's not really the way to achieve justice, or peace, or anything worthwhile

Maybe this is a way to think about Palm Sunday; for a few brief hours what Jesus proclaimed coincided with what many of his followers wanted – freedom from Rome, an end to occupation – maybe that's the kind of King they had in mind when they shouted 'hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'

But then he entered the city – and, as Mark tells the story, nothing much changed; the Romans were still there; commerce still thronged the Temple; Jesus went about unhindered, like a tourist – maybe, for a while, the Romans decided not to make a martyr of him. Maybe his followers, who'd come all the way from Galilee expecting some kind of rebellion, were disappointed. Maybe the power of the state was just too much – like it often appears in modern China, or Myanmar – or too subtle, too reasonable, like it sometimes appears over here, with bills in Parliament and government ministers never really answering what they're asked or having to account for anything. Maybe sometimes protests and processions take place out of frustration more than anything else..

Maybe that's why, over the few days to Good Friday Jesus found himself increasingly alone – maybe that's why, outside Pilate's palace; they'd given up on him completely in favour of Barabbas..

Or, maybe, Jesus knew their hearts – knew what we all know, really; that the protestors might have right on their side but they don't necessarily have right in their hearts; and that the politicians might make the right noises but deep inside they crave power most of all

Maybe that's what Palm Sunday means, today – it's a snapshot of the contradictions and compromises that are in play whenever the powerless protest and the *powerful* suppress

And at the heart of it all is Jesus – the King whose kingdom is not of this world; who comes in the name of the Lord of *heaven* and earth – who knows our hearts..

Who knows how much we want peace and justice; who knows how powerful are the powers ranged against such things – who knows, most of all, that *nothing* can be achieved without sacrifice; who will be silent before the world's power and who calls to those who would join the procession – 'follow *me*'..

I guess few of us would be comfortable, these days, with joining a protest; maybe we might sign a petition or write to an MP or send an email, but let's not forget that the struggle between what's right & what's expedient, between the powerless & the *powerful*, is an ancient struggle – and finds new expression in every age – Black Lives Matter; Me Too; Extinction Rebellion – you name it - and let's not forget, either, that the righteousness, the good news, of God's Kingdom is a challenge to every protest, every regime, every parliament and every *one*–

And that righteousness *always* comes at a price – if not on a protest march then in the heart..as Jesus said one time, 'For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the good news, will save it.'

### Offering

Lord we come before you, frustrated at the state of the world; fed up with the shallowness of our existence, but thankful – always thankful, for everything we have and everything you have given and most of all for Christ whom you have given – so we give, in these and all our gifts – that the world might be changed; that we might be changed – that your Kingdom will be seen, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..amen.

'On the cross'

Geoff Baker- Tyndale virtual singing group

## Intercessions

Let's call it like it is in prayer today; let's bring the parlous state of the world and our lives before God  
In Myanmar oppression reigns and protests are suppressed by violence; in China protest can't get off the ground; in Hong Kong the state is coming down heavy; in Zinjiang province the Uighur people wait without much hope for the protest of others; in Iran the state plays politics with peoples' lives, and in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere; in Europe and over here governments argue while people die; protests are hijacked by violence and parliaments find a ready excuse to introduce harsher measures; immigrants are targeted; homeless people are neglected; flags are flown while poverty stalks the land; in the US conspiracy theories fly around and so do bullets..

Everywhere the poor pay the price as climates change and we all struggle as viruses rampage  
Lord, your world is hurting; please bring a fresh outbreak of peace and justice – when will you save the people, Lord, when, Lord, when?

We remain in silence

In our hearts anxiety mixes with boredom and fear; loneliness deepens as isolation continues; insecurities are compounded by redundancies and business closures; in our communities crime rates soar; vaccination rates climb & illness rates climb; key workers work ever harder; others cannot work at all; in our homes frustrations simmer & domestic violence breaks out; in our nation politicians and officials struggle to do the right things and corruption is never far away.

Lord, we are hurting; please bring a fresh outbreak of kindness and forbearance – when will you save the people, Lord, when, Lord, when?

We remain in silence

the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

We remain in silence

Lord, guide our protests and processions; challenge our leaders' ways; strengthen our institutions, deepen our resolve – help us to hunger and thirst after righteousness; lead us in the ways of Christ - we commit ourselves once more to following him.

### The Grace is said:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

**BPW 225 ['Ride On, Ride On in Majesty'](#)**

Salisbury Cathedral Choir & Simon Lole,

### Benediction

So may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always,  
Amen

Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible – Ian recording and processing; Nick & Tina printing and posting; Sue and John reading; Rachel sorting music and the Tyndale virtual singers for singing – thank you one and all for taking part.

As we come to Holy Week and as each day one of the '5 Churches' leads us in contemplation and meditation we come to the heart of the Christian story and once again we are filled with awe and wonder at the mystery of God's message – of sacrificial love. We trust that it will keep us till we meet again and enrich our lives of faith and service as we continue to support one another, pray for each other and determine to show God's love

**['Be A Light'](#)**

Voices of Hope Children's Choir (Virtual Choir)