



Welcome

It's time to again to join together in worship and in virtual community as the church. We are continuing to experiment with resources to help you in your homes and we again trust that this 'paper church' will help us all as we are not together in the usual sense of the word.

Let's keep trying new things, discovering what is helpful to engage with God and sharing those ideas with others. Let's keep connecting on the phone and online and encouraging each other in faith.

As always, a few suggestions before we begin:

1. Get prepared for worship – have your Bible close by, perhaps set up some favourite music to listen to, find some food to have during communion – it doesn't have to be bread and grape-juice, it could be whatever is available (tea and a biscuit) to use in this symbolic time.
2. Get into a 'sacred' space. It's important, when we are not physically in a dedicated worship space (like a church building), to mentally and spiritually shift into a sense of worship. Be intentional. Some examples of how you might prepare: sit somewhere where you feel receptive and responsive to God (e.g. a cosy chair or outside in the garden); have some visual representation of God (perhaps a small cross, your Bible, a symbol or image); start with a few moments of silence and deep breathing.
3. Consider your environment and what will work for you. If you have others in your house – house-mates / family, consider sharing this time with them, each reading or participating as appropriate. Or you might simply reflect individually, in your own time and space.

Sunday 5 April 2020



**“A Time for Triumph”
(Matthew 21:1-11)**

This week we've got a music focus, so you might like to tune into the selected songs, read through the lyrics, or listen to some other music that speaks powerfully to you.

Great Are You Lord

Verse

You give life You are love
You bring light to the darkness
You give hope You restore ev'ry heart that is broken
And great are You Lord

Chorus

It's Your breath in our lungs
So we pour out our praise
We pour out our praise
It's Your breath in our lungs
So we pour out our praise to You only

Bridge

And all the earth will shout Your praise
Our hearts will cry these bones will sing
Great are You Lord

David Leonard | Jason Ingram | Leslie Jordan
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Here I Am To Worship

Verse 1

Light of the world
You stepped down into darkness
Opened my eyes let me see
Beauty that made
This heart adore You
Hope of a life spent with You

Chorus

So here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that You're my God
And You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me

Verse 2

King of all days
Oh so highly exalted
Glorious in heaven above
Humbly You came
To the earth You created
All for love's sake became poor

Bridge

And I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross
And I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross

Tim Hughes

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Prayer

God, we thank you for your Word and the power of the many stories within it. As we journey through Palm Sunday, into Holy Week and towards Easter, we pray that you will bring the story to life for us in a new way this year, especially as we engage in a different way. Draw us in, challenge and encourage us, help us to see the ways of your Kingdom more clearly so that we might each be able to join in with your work on Earth in this season.

Bible Reading: Matthew 21:1-11 (NIV)

(If you are with others perhaps take turns to read different sections)

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 fulfill 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.”

Power

What is power? What is triumph?

In the time and culture of the first ‘Palm Sunday’, it was common for political leaders to enter a city on horseback with great pomp and ceremony – a big budget production to show off their power and importance. After Jesus’ long and purposeful journey towards Jerusalem, his entrance to the city is the complete opposite. On the back of a donkey, with no weapons, no big budget, no show of power in the way that we usually define it.

Many people came to worship him – they understood what was going on. But society at large would have just laughed at someone trying to stage such a humble reception for a leader. You can read more about Jesus’ political statement in this Sojourners article: <https://sojo.net/articles/politics-palm-sunday>. Adam Ericksen points out that (in Matthew’s Gospel), Jesus quotes Zechariah 9:9-10, but purposefully omits the part about the king being triumphant and victorious.

Activity

Get yourself a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. With your dominant hand (*I’m right-handed*), on that half of the page (*for me, the right-hand side of the page*), draw what an important political leader entering Jerusalem might look like. Put them on a horse, surround them with guards, flags, etc.

Then, using your *other* hand, on the other half of the page, try drawing Jesus’ contrasting entry, weapon-less, on a donkey, with palm branches being waved in worship. Simple, humble, and unlikely to be published in an art gallery!

This is the power dynamic of Jesus entry into Jerusalem.

This is the subversive, upside-down type of power that Jesus shows again and again in his life.

What is “triumph”?

The Servant King

Verse 1

From heav'n You came helpless babe
Enter'd our world Your glory veil'd
Not to be served but to serve
And give Your life that we might live

Chorus

This is our God the Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the Servant King

Verse 2

There in the garden of tears
My heavy load He chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
Yet not my will but Yours He said

Verse 3

Come see His hands and His feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails
Surrendered

Verse 4

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving

Graham Kendrick

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I Will Run To You

Verse 1

Your eye is on the sparrow
And Your hand it comforts me
From the ends of the earth
To the depths of my heart
Let Your mercy and strength be seen

Verse 2

You call me to Your purpose
As angels understand
For Your glory may You draw all men
As Your love and grace demands

Chorus

And I will run to You
To Your words of truth
Not by might not by power
But by the Spirit of God
Yes I will run the race
'Til I see Your face
Oh let me live in the glory (of Your grace)

Ending

Oh let me live in the glory
Oh let me live in the glory of Your grace

Darlene Zschech

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Power

It's now close to 4 years since Donald Trump became the president of the USA. At the time there was a real fear and anxiety around the world that giving such a person such a position of power and influence would mean the end of the world as we know it – or indeed the end of the world. Without going into any commentary or evaluation around his actions and their impact on people around the US and the world, he certainly hasn't managed to make any significant difference to my life, despite being (arguably) the most powerful human on the planet.

Contrast this with the coronavirus, its diameter is about a 500th the width of a human hair. In just a few months, this tiny virus has managed to significantly change the way of life of the majority of people around the world. Obviously, it's tragic – but it shows that the smallest of things can have huge influence. Not even the biggest military in the world can intimidate this tiny virus.

As Jesus rides into the big city of Jerusalem on his (well, it's not even his) donkey, he would be a point of mockery and humiliation if we didn't understand the whole story and how the events of Easter unfold. It's only in the knowledge that Jesus goes on to conquer death itself that we understand the reality of his triumphal entrance. Otherwise, he would be a joke, with humility to the point of humiliation, forgotten the week later as yet another wannabe king.

All around us in our world (both before and during the pandemic) we see people with impressive plans, big visions, significant initiatives to help others, to change the world for good. These are often great and worth supporting, but you might feel like you have no big ideas, no capacity, limited ability to follow things through. Jesus' triumphant entry is an encouragement to us that there is real power in the smallest and humblest of things.

Our smallest offerings are the things that can change the world. Simple acts of support for a neighbour; setting up connections in your street; a phone call just to say hi to someone; slowing down and quietly deepening your connection with God – these are acts of power and triumph over things that seek to disconnect and defeat our communities.

Jesus says over and over through the Gospels – the Kingdom of Heaven is like: yeast that can't be seen yet makes the bread "work"; a weed that spreads under the radar until it is everywhere; a seed that goes from being insignificantly small to growing into all variety of plants.

We often refer to the Kingdom of God as being an 'upside down' world. Yet, as a colleague at Scripture Union recently pointed out, God created everything and probably didn't get it upside down. Perhaps it is us that are upside down and have an upside down perspective on the Kingdom. Perhaps society has power and triumph upside down, so this Palm Sunday the invitation is for us to move towards getting the right way up.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast, like salt, like a seed.

Communion

Have some food prepared for this time

Communion is usually a time of being *in* community, breaking bread together as a symbolic remembering of Jesus' last supper with his disciples and followers. If we are not in our normal community it might feel strange to do this alone or with your household.

If you are alone, intentionally consider who you are communing with: think of the people in close proximity to you e.g. neighbours, give thanks for them, consider and visually bring to mind friends in our church community who would normally be sitting close by at this time, give thanks for them.

If you are with others, consider each taking part in the following reading as well as intentionally bringing to mind the broader community of faith.

Communion is an embodiment of our unity with Jesus, with others around our suburbs, and will all followers around the world and across all time.

Continued...

Matthew 26:26-29

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the ^[b] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

The Bread (take / share your food in this moment)

This is the body of Christ, the bread of life—given for you. Amen.

The Cup (take / share your drink in this moment)

This is the blood of Christ, the cup of salvation—shed for you. Amen.

Sing For Joy All The Earth

Verse 1

Sing for joy all the earth
Shout with gladness
Bring your praises
To the house of the Lord

Verse 2

Sing to Him a new song
All creation
And rejoice
In His wonderful name

Chorus

Hallelujah You are worthy
Hallelujah You are King
Hallelujah You're the one who set me free

Bridge

Yes You're alive
And You're coming again

Andrew Naylor | Mark S. Cullen
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If you find music helpful as a way to engage with God, we encourage you to take some more time to listen (and play or sing along!) to more. You could try this YouTube playlist if you have access

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcHqC9YNzSaB621iqMmxfeMUvroQqYr3L>

More with Ringwood Church of Christ

- You can join us for morning tea and a casual chat in a virtual 'foyer' on Zoom at 11am Sunday 5 April – connect to Zoom through ringwd.com/foyer
- Let us know that you've engaged in worship today with our online connect card: ringwd.com/connect
- More resources will be available for your journey through Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Sunday
- You can join us for an online Dawn Service at 6.15am for a 6:44am sunrise on Sunday 12 April through Facebook Live – let's watch the sunrise together! Visit [Ringwood Church of Christ on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ringwoodchurchofchrist) and look for the live video.
- Alpha will still be happening, online, starting Sunday 19 April and Thursday 23 April