

Palm Sunday

Notes on the Bible readings

- This is Palm Sunday – without the palms! Instead, Luke draws us to the people laying their cloaks on the road – an act of sacrifice – literally, for the cloaks would surely be spoiled, but also symbolically, as cloaks were valuable items often given in surety against loans.
- The psalm is the Jewish Passover hymn and so is particularly important on this day. It is what the pilgrims would have sung as Jesus entered Jerusalem. It's a song of praise to God who has ordained a moment when, despite the fiercest rejection, he will lift himself and his people out of the mire.
- The psalm is also quoted in Luke 19.38, declaring that Jesus comes not in the name of the Romans, the religious leaders, or anyone else, but 'in the name of the Lord'. He comes not as an earthly king, needing a strong steed to project his power, but on a humble donkey. Jesus' power does not need extra props; it will speak for itself on the cross.
- While one crowd is caught up in a moment of adoration to Jesus, in a few days' time, another crowd will turn violently against him. We may wonder at their fickleness, but the answer lies within us, and our own faithlessness to an ever-faithful king. No wonder Jesus weeps over Jerusalem after the procession draws to a close (v.41); maybe he does for us, too.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ What might these stones 'shout out'?
- ▶ What do you need to shout out about?
- ▶ How will you celebrate Jesus in your community this Palm Sunday?



A prayer of rejoicing

*God is with us; we are enfolded in his steadfast love.
This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
God is with us; his peace will strengthen us.
This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
God is with us; let us offer our worship.
This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.*

A prayer for others

*For all those who, tonight, will go to bed hungry; for those who rely on food banks; for those whose harvest has failed; for those whose family members are too ill to work – gracious God, mercifully hear us.
For all the places in the world where there is war, where people have to leave their homes because of violence; for families and friends separated by the trauma of conflict and migration, that they may soon be reunited – gracious God, mercifully hear us.
For all the different communities within the Church throughout the world; that they may have vision to serve in imaginative ways offering compassion and hope to those to whom they relate – gracious God, mercifully hear us.
For us; for those we love easily and those who challenge us; that we may be strengthened and supported – gracious God, mercifully hear us. Amen.*

A personal prayer

*Ride on, Jesus, ride in majesty.
Ride on, Jesus, ride in humility.
Ride on, Jesus, ride in suffering.
Ride on, Jesus, ride to glory. Amen.*

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to www.rootsontheweb.com and click on PostScript.



Live your faith

With your palm cross as a reminder, think of one way each day to show that Jesus is king of your life – e.g. how you treat or speak to others, or what you do with your possessions.