

## **Suggested outline for family worship – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April at 11.00am**

If you're able to use the internet, please use the links to watch/sing along with the songs suggested.

### **Prayer**

**Song suggestion: "Praise is rising, Hosanna"** – watch and sing along at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSBR-r9B\\_94](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSBR-r9B_94)

If you'd now like to go to our new Facebook page, you can watch a video from Peter that includes the Bible Reading, the Devotion and a prayer. The video will be available from 11.00am on Sunday morning and can be found here: [www.facebook.com/muckamorepc](http://www.facebook.com/muckamorepc)

When the video is finished, please continue to worship together by praying for others and watching/singing along with the final song suggestion. We hope you find this material helpful.

### **Reading: Luke 19:28-44 (NIV)**

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'" Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They replied, "The Lord needs it." They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

### **Devotion:**

#### **Take it or leave it?**

It's amazing how quickly we can decide whether we like somebody or not – a new school mate; work colleague; neighbour; politician; celebrity and so on. First impressions are really important – as the saying goes, "you don't get a second chance to make a first impression". And so we can make up our minds very quickly – to like them or not like them – though some of us prefer to get to know them a bit better before we finally make up our minds.

When it comes to Jesus, people have all these reactions and more – as the events of Palm Sunday illustrate so well for us. The choice the people had to make about Jesus as the events of the first Easter began to take shape was not an easy one. Is it ever do you think?

On the one hand, there was something in them that warmed to him – they wanted to be with him; to spend time with him; to hear what he had to say; to see what he would do next. He'd done so much for so many of them – opened the eyes of blind people; healed many sick people;

restored sanity to some who were mentally disturbed. He'd unlocked the gate of heaven and shown them things they'd never dreamt of, never mind seen, before. They knew that. There were so many things about him that appealed to them, things that answered a whole heap of their deepest needs and longings. They knew that too. And in most cases, they knew he spoke the truth as it had never been spoken before; so clearly, simply and powerfully.

On the other hand, there was something in them that wasn't sure – something that made them stop short in their commitment to him. They recognised that if they accepted this man as the King they proclaimed him to be that Palm Sunday, they'd almost certainly find themselves in even more trouble with the Romans than they were already. They'd be guilty of treason against Caesar and the price for that was higher than they were prepared to pay. And for some of them accepting Jesus as their king would exact a high price in other ways – jobs, perhaps, especially if they were among the many people who earned their living from the daily activities of Temple worship and sacrifice – the stall-holders who sold the animals people needed for the various sacrifices or who took commission for changing Roman coins to the Shekels required for the annual payments towards the upkeep of the Temple – the very people Jesus reacted so strongly against because they were over-charging the people, quoting from the OT prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah as he did so, saying: *“My house will be a house of prayer, says the Lord; but you have made it a den of robbers”*. Those who'd already decided they didn't like him liked him even less after that – especially the religious leaders who saw him as a threat to themselves.

And so it goes on – some of them wanted him; some of them didn't. Some were drawn to him and some were put off by him. Many of the crowd on Palm Sunday in Luke 19 welcomed him and hailed him as Messiah with cheers of *“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”* Luk 19:38. Yet, some of that same crowd took a very different attitude – *“Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”* Luk 19:39. Some of the crowd were willing to accept him with open arms while some of them wanted to stick a label on him with the words “Return to Sender”.

Following Jesus was a costly choice for many as they “left all to follow him” – that's true, but, actually, there's a cost for everyone who follows him – all of us have to change our way of life in some way or other – some of us very radically.

And what of the wider public alive at the time of these events and hearing the reports of the comings-and-goings surrounding Jesus and his ministry? I suspect the vast majority of them were somewhere in between. Not sure what to make of him; not sure how to respond to him. And from the way many people talk and live these days things haven't improved with the passage of time – in fact, the suspicion towards Jesus has got a whole lot worse in many ways; the array of feelings experienced by the people back then is heightened in the people of our day and generation – why? Because we don't have the real, live, human Jesus living among us that we can check out for ourselves! We don't have the personal privilege and pleasure of seeing and believing that the people did back then; we have to rely on the account given to us of his life and ministry in the Bible. We have to rely on faith, taking the Bible at face-value, believing what it reveals to us about God and ourselves, sin and salvation and how we are to live our lives. We can't hear Jesus preach like they did; we can't watch him lay hands on the sick, cast out demons, raise people from the dead like they did – we can only picture it in our mind's eye as we read the Bible and hear it preached and explained; we can only feel the influence of the Holy Spirit invisibly working in our hearts and minds, exposing the error of the world's mistaken view of sin, righteousness, and judgment, just as Jesus said he would in Jn 16:8. And for many the result is a caginess that shows itself in a stop-go, love-hate, in-out relationship with the Christian church – they attend worship in fits and starts; they make use of its services for special occasions;

Christmas and Easter, they say, wouldn't be the same without church... Yet, in between times, they're really not that interested because in the cold light of day it would be too costly for them. But the fairytale-like stories of a baby born in Bethlehem and a resurrection from a sealed and guarded grave have their attractions – yet neither of these seem to remove the caginess they feel towards Jesus himself – do they follow him or forget him?

Back at that first Easter week not many of the people involved in the events deliberately set out to kill Jesus; not many deliberately set out to reject the good that Jesus represented. They did it because they were caught in the trap of their own personal conflicts of interest; their own very real fears and insecurities. And when these things begin to work against the best of ideals, the deepest of longings, we often end up in a no-man's land in which we're left unable to do what we know we need to do. And all the time Jesus pays the price – *"the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all"* Isa 53:6 – it was true back in those first Easter days and it's still true in the Easter days of 2020.

It doesn't take much imagination to picture ourselves among the crowd that followed Jesus on that first Palm Sunday *"to the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives"*, v.37. Some in the crowd are so struck with his majesty and holiness that they welcome him and worship him. Others begin to count the cost, adding up all the "ifs and buts and maybes" that spring to mind, becoming so nervous and anxious in the process that they wish the people welcoming and worshipping him would keep quiet and let them get on with their lives in peace. And still others, many others, fall somewhere in between – torn between accepting him and rejecting him; part of them wanting to worship him while part of them wanting to walk away from him.

Palm Sunday is like a mirror for us – what does it reveal about ourselves as we look into it? Do we like what we see? Do we long that things would be different?

The amazing truth of the Gospel is that God has a way of taking our doubt and hesitation and turning it into confidence and assurance. Instead of experiencing the sorrow and condemnation described by Jesus in Luk 19:42-44 as he wept over Jerusalem's rejection of him and the destruction that would come upon the city as a result, we can know the joy and reward that comes from accepting the opportunity offered to us by God in the coming of Jesus as Saviour and Lord – *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him"* as Jesus tells us in Jn 3:16-17.

It's time to shake ourselves out of the 'take it or leave it' attitude we have towards Jesus. It's time to recognise the reality of what was going on in the events of Easter – here is God coming to us in Jesus to deal with our sin and the damage it has done to our relationship with him. Here is God coming to us in a physical and costly expression of his deep and breath-taking love for us. How can we just take that or leave that? The benefit of welcoming Jesus into our lives far outweighs anything we might think it would cost us – who could put a price on eternal life? Only God – he paid for it in the death of his only Son, Jesus: *"he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed"* Isa 53:5. We can't just ignore what he has done for us, can we? We've got to make up our minds one way or t'other. Which will it be for you this Easter?

**Prayers** – you might want to ask each member of the family to pray or you might want to lead everyone in prayer, yourself, based on some of the thoughts shared in the devotion.

**Song suggestion:** "Make way, make way for the King of kings" by Graham Kendrick – watch and sing along at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aICQ7fb0hEA>

### Activity for Children: *(Full family participation encouraged for this one)*

This week we are going to make some noise (or maybe for some of your homes at the minute, just even more noise). Many of the best songs & pieces of music have come from a place of imagination & creativity, and that's exactly what we are going to do today.

With your Children, create and decorate your very own musical instrument using any objects & materials that you can source in your house.

As your children are thinking about the different materials that they are going to use to create their instrument, discuss with them the different places that they have been that have been really noisy and see if they can describe the various noises that they have heard there.

Ask the following questions:

- 1) Where have you been that has been really noisy?
- 2) What noises could you hear?
- 3) What/ Who were making these noises?

In this week's family worship, we are thinking about a day that was really noisy. Jesus was riding into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday and people were praising him as they threw out their cloaks and tree branches on the ground. You could discuss with your children the kind of things that would have been said (eg: *hosanna in the Highest, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*) and also how they might have been feeling as they saw Jesus. This would have been a very noisy place, but a lot of this noise was made up of people's voices as they shouted and sang to Jesus.

The instrument that your child is making is going to be different than others that will also be made by other families today from our church, they will be made from different materials, they will look different and they might sound very different too. There would have also been different noises as Jesus entered Jerusalem, as not everyone would have been praising him but actually some people there didn't want to worship Jesus and didn't believe that Jesus really was the Son of God.

Discuss with your children:

- 1) If you were there in the crowd on that Palm Sunday what would you have been saying/ singing and why?
- 2) Are there still people today that don't believe in who Jesus is? And How can we show them that Jesus is the Son of God and loves them so much?

The amazing truth is that though we cannot see Jesus today in the same way that the crowd did, we know that he is Still the Son of God and we can still follow him today and he wants that because he loves us so much. When we worship God we praise him, singing many of our favourite songs, praying to him and speaking out his words of truth from the bible (just like all the amazing verses that we wrote up on the front of our forts last week). This week we will be remembering the last week of Jesus' life before he died on the cross for us and then rose again and even though we are all at home at the moment we can continue to praise him and thank him for just how much he loves us.

Now that you have finished and have some amazing new instruments in front of you, why don't you sing your favourite song together as a family and praise him with lots of noise!

Send the pictures of your finished instruments to Hayley (07598329604) and we will be able to see everyone's amazing creations on the Church Facebook page.