

## Worship at home Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025: Palm Sunday

Welcome to this short act of worship from the South-West Peninsula District. We invite you to spend time with God, knowing that other people across the District are sharing this with you. Today's service was prepared by Bev Smerdon, a local preacher with Plymouth & Devonport Circuit.

CCL:50389

### Introduction

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!"

Today we mark the beginning of Holy Week as we remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

### Opening prayers

Let us approach God with reverence and awe and take a moment to remember that, while we are always in his presence, there is something special about joining in praise and worship and prayer. **Let us pray:**

Lord Jesus, as I reflect on your entry into Jerusalem and journey once again through Holy Week, help me to draw closer to you through these remembrances. Whether I have travelled this way many times before or if this is a new experience, you Lord, remain as close to me now as you always are because you do not change: you who are Alpha and Omega, you who were here before time itself, you who spoke life out of emptiness and darkness, speak life into my life as I come to worship you today and every day. **Amen.**

### STF 262: All Glory, Laud & Honour

All glory, laud, and honor,  
to thee, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.  
Thou art the King of Israel,  
thou David's royal Son,  
who in the Lord's name comest,  
the King and Blessed One.

All glory, laud and honour.....

The company of angels  
are praising thee on high,  
and we with all creation  
in chorus make reply.  
The people of the Hebrews  
with psalms before thee went;  
our prayer and praise and anthems  
before thee we present.

To thee, before thy passion,  
they sang their hymns of praise;  
to thee, now high exalted,  
our melody we raise.

Thou didst accept their praises;  
accept the prayers we bring,  
who in all good delightest,  
thou good and gracious King.

All glory, laud and honour.....

*St Theodulph of Orleans (d.821)  
trans John Mason Neale (1811-1866)*

### Prayers:

Take a moment to be still and focus on the Lord's presence. His Holy Spirit is with you, whether you can sense it or not. Speak the following prayers out aloud if you feel able to:

Begin by thanking God for Jesus, for Palm Sunday and the Easter season and all it means to you.

Speak out other things that you want to thank God for ...

Finish by thanking God for his scriptures, ask him to open them to you now as you read (aloud, if you are able):

**Bible Readings:**

- Psalm 118: 1,2, 19-29
- John 12:12-16 or Matthew 21: 1-11

**STF 263: Hosanna in the Highest**

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.  
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.  
Lord, we lift up your name,  
with hearts full of praise.  
Be exalted, O Lord my God;  
hosanna in the highest.

Glory, glory, glory to the King of kings.  
Glory, glory, glory to the King of kings.  
Lord, we lift up your name,  
with hearts full of praise.  
Be exalted, O Lord my God;  
glory to the King of kings.

*Carl Tuttle (b.1953)*

**Let us pray:**

Loving God, you are always with us.  
We praise you for all that you have done  
for us and all that you continue to do for us  
each and every day. We may not always  
sense your presence, but we continue to  
put our trust in you as we offer you our  
praise and worship today.

**Message:**

Was there a time when you can remember  
being part of a big crowd, which was  
excited and celebrating. Every year on  
Palm Sunday in the streets of Jerusalem  
people re-enact Jesus' Entry into  
Jerusalem. (You can watch it on You-tube)

How amazing that must be to be walking  
the same streets Jesus walked. But have

you ever been in the middle of a huge  
crowd which begins to turn angry or  
hostile? How frightening that is.

In 1990, Nelson Mandela was released  
after spending 27 years in prison. He  
travelled to Cape Town to address a rally  
of about 100,000 people. The atmosphere  
was very tense, and some violence had  
already broken out before he arrived. It is  
unimaginable what would have happened  
if he had had a heart for vengeance and  
bloodshed. Instead, he said, "I greet you  
all in the name of peace".

Perhaps Jesus also knew the terrible  
consequences that might have followed if  
he had come into Jerusalem as an  
important leader but, as we know, he  
didn't. He came in a spirit of peace and  
forgiveness, riding on a donkey.

Have you ever seen anyone riding on a  
donkey? Or perhaps you have fond  
memories of donkey riding on a beach  
during a childhood holiday. I don't think I  
noticed how people looked – I was too  
busy looking at whichever donkey I had  
fallen in love with that year. But people  
do look very funny riding a donkey,  
especially adults, whose feet nearly touch  
the floor (unless they've got really short  
legs!) Sometimes, I think we are so used  
to these biblical images they lose any  
impact they once had. And we need to  
reflect on them anew.

Despite the incongruity of the situation  
hundreds of people flocked to see Jesus,  
they waved palm branches and laid down  
their coats on the ground before him, a  
sign of respect and commitment – no  
wonder the authorities were rattled. They  
would never be able to conceive of the  
road Jesus was following – the road that  
required humility and suffering, dedication  
and trust.

As you read the story in Matthew's gospel and perhaps later when you reflect on it further. Listen to what God may be saying to you – about being a follower of Jesus and your commitment and trust. Perhaps you need him to help you with things you are struggling with. Perhaps there are things he wants you to lay before him as a sign of your commitment and love. Perhaps there are attributes that Jesus showed which you need help with so that you can become a better follower of Jesus, or a better witness to others.

Whatever it is that God reveals to you through your times of prayer, scripture and worship you can be assured that he doesn't ask anything of us that he hasn't experienced before us and he won't ask anything of us without also offering to be there to help us with it. That's why Jesus took that long journey through Holy Week, that he might make a way for us to follow.

Be assured today of his love, his peace which passes all understanding and his presence, whether you feel him or not. After all, as Paul reminds us [2 Cor 5:7] we live by faith and not by sight. And faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. [Hebrews 11:1]

If we knew and understood everything, we wouldn't need faith would we! So, if at times your feelings or your thoughts start to get the better of you – turn to the one who loves you more than anyone else possibly can, whether through prayer, scripture, worship or meditation, take time to be with him because he speaks life into darkness and desperation.

**Amen**

**Prayer of Forgiveness:**

God of tender compassion, be merciful and gracious to me and forgive me for my sins as I come to you now in penitence.  
Forgive me for when my actions have betrayed the name of Jesus.  
Forgive me for claiming to be his disciple, yet, at times, disregarding his teachings.  
For singing 'hosanna', while things in my life have shouted, 'crucify him'.  
Forgive me for talking of grace and mercy, while failing to forgive others.  
God of tender compassion, be merciful and gracious to me and forgive me for those thoughts and words and deeds, which have not been worthy of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

*(sing the next chorus at least 2 or 3 times)*

**STF 781 Take, Oh Take Me as I am.**

Take, O take me as I am;  
Summon out what I shall be;  
Set your seal upon my heart  
And live in me.

*John L Bell (b. 1949)*

**Receive God's forgiveness** as you speak these words over yourself:

In the name of Christ, my sins are forgiven.  
**Amen.**

And as we have received God's forgiveness let us continue in prayers for others. **Let us pray:**

Lord, I come to you now to pray for those matters in the world which worry or concern me ..... [add your prayers]

**O Lord hear my prayer.**

Lord, I want to pray for the church locally and worldwide ..... [add your prayers]

**O Lord hear my prayer.**

Lord, I pray for the people I know and love  
and those I don't like very much because  
you told us to love our enemies, and most  
of us find that pretty difficult,

Help me to pray as I lift those who are....  
[*add your prayers*]

**O Lord hear my prayer.**

Lord, you know me ..... [*bring to God  
those things you need to pray for in your  
situation*].

**O Lord hear my prayer.**

Gracious and loving God, thank you that I  
can bring all my cares and concerns to you.  
Help me to believe and trust that you hear  
me, and you aid me and those I have  
prayed for today and always, in the name  
of your loving Son and our Lord and  
Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**STF 265 Ride on, Ride on, in Majesty**

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Hark! all the tribes Hosanna! cry;  
Your humble beast pursues its road,  
With palms and scattered garments  
strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die!  
O Christ, your triumphs now begin  
O'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
The wingèd squadrons of the sky  
Look down with sad and wondering eyes,  
To see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh;  
The Father on His sapphire throne,  
Expects His own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die;  
Bow your meek head to mortal pain,  
Then take, oh God, your power, and reign.

*Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868)*

**Closing:**

As we travel through Holy Week....

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it  
again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be  
evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be  
anxious about anything, but in every  
situation, by prayer and petition, with  
thanksgiving, present your requests to God.  
<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all  
understanding, will guard your hearts and  
your minds in Christ Jesus.

*[Philippians 4: 4-7]*

**Blessing:**

Gracious God, your son, our Saviour entered  
Jerusalem and gave his life for the world.  
With a grateful heart, I dedicate myself to  
you anew this day. Help me to take up my  
cross and follow Jesus that, sharing in his  
sufferings, I may know the power of his  
resurrection.

I ask these things for his sake and for your  
glory, through the presence and power of  
your Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**