

Sermon Sunday 28th March 2021

Psalm 118: 1-2 and 19 to end.

Mark 11: 1 – 11

I remember as a young choir boy that every Palm Sunday as we left the choir vestry in procession, we were given a palm frond or branch to process around the Church, singing and waving the palm fronds followed by the congregation. These fronds came out every Palm Sunday and we weren't allowed to touch them until the procession. Well, I now understand why because no doubt we would have had sword fights or hit each other with them. We were trying to recreate Jesus' entry in to Jerusalem, although we didn't have a donkey but how true was our recreation or our own perception or idea of that first Palm Sunday?

Let us look at the time of Marks Gospel. It was coming up to the Feast of the Passover and there would be thousands of pilgrims in Jerusalem or walking towards it for the Passover. Jesus, his disciples and followers coming up from Jericho would not have been the only pilgrims on that road. Jesus arrives on foot but he does not enter the city on foot with his disciples and followers instead he enters Jerusalem on an ass, riding not walking. What an entry, in style. Style yes, eye catching yes but why because any one riding would be conspicuous made even more eye catching by the laying of cloaks and the waving of palm leaves. This would have been Jesus's own disciples or followers with them. We're not actually told it was the people of Jerusalem in Marks Gospel, a point that goes against our perception of that event. Although this should not distract from the significance of that first Palm Sunday or Jesus' entry into Jerusalem which would ultimately lead to His death.

Up to that point Jesus would not let his disciples talk freely about Jesus being the Messiah. The act of riding into Jerusalem is a sign or act to show the people of Jerusalem who Jesus is. Anyone who knew his scripture would recall Zechariah 9:9 ‘LO YOUR KING COMES TO YOU JERUSALEM; TRIUMPHANT AND VICTORIOUS IS HE, HUMBLE AND RIDING ON A DONKEY.’ So, the act of arriving as He did was what we would probably call a staged managed event but this was not by people but God. Importantly it is a sign to the people of Jesus the Messiah, a sign for all the people then and now.

The words of Zechariah would not have been lost on Jesus’ followers. Look at verses 10 and 11 from Marks Gospel {READ 10/11}. David established Jerusalem and since his death and his descendant’s deaths and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians there had been no other King of David’s line in Jerusalem. So here was Jesus, of David’s line, the Messiah to save the world.

On that day Jesus was throwing down the gauntlet to the Jewish authorities who knew all about him and his preaching and miracles. A gauntlet to recognise in Jesus as the one who comes in the name of the Lord, the promised Messiah. Well, we all know the answer to that one. They would not accept this and they arrested Jesus, took him before Pilate and despite Pilate being unable to find him guilty, they had him crucified. Jesus was sacrificed for you and me and the events of Palm Sunday are an important sign of the road Jesus had to follow for you and me and all mankind.

When you look at your Palm Cross think about Jesus, his triumphal entry into Jerusalem to certain death and think about what we have to do now as the followers of Christ. I believe we must always be ready to take up our Cross and proclaim the word of God through the teachings of His Son Jesus Christ, in all we do, say and think. That

may lead to having to make some difficult perhaps life changing decisions in our lives so I would ask you to look at your Palm Cross this Holy Week every day and ask in prayer what God wants you to do, thinking all the time about the sacrifice Jesus made for each and every one of us. TAKE VERSE 28 FROM PSALM 118 AND THINK AND PRAY THIS VERSE OVER YOUR PALM CROSS {READ VERSE 28.}

Another challenge for you now. Display the Palm Cross on your door or window for all to see to show that you are a Christian and a follower of the true God.

So, a different look from all the pictures we have seen about Palm Sunday. Despite the noise and celebrations, it was a very personal journey perhaps lonely journey which Jesus had to make to show who he was and is today, our Saviour.

Amen.