



Heacham Parish Church

## **Sunday Service 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021 4<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday**

*Interlude on 'Winchester New' – the tune we often sing to 'Ride on, ride on in majesty' - the composer is 'Bill' Lloyd Webber (Andrew Lloyd Webber's father). Played by Adrian on the church organ*

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God, so let us come together to be God's people.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you  
**All and also with you.**

Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

### **Introduction**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, during Lent we have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice for the celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection. Today we come together to begin this solemn celebration in union with the Church throughout the world. Christ enters his own city to complete his work as our Saviour, to suffer, to die, and to rise again. Let us go with him in faith and love, so that, united with him in his sufferings, we may share his risen life.

*The people hold up palm crosses while this prayer is said:*

God our Saviour, whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and to die; let these palms be for us signs of his victory and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **All Amen.**

***Song:* Ride on ride on in majesty**

Sung & played by Judith, Sue, Richard C, Rosie, Colin, Hilary and Lesley

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Hark, all the tribes, 'Hosanna!' cry,  
O Saviour meek, pursue Your 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 angel armies 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  
awaits 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, O God, Your power, and reign.

**The Collect**

Let us pray for a closer union with Christ in his suffering and in his glory.

*Silence is kept.*

Almighty and everlasting God,  
who in your tender love towards the human race  
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ  
to take upon him our flesh  
and to suffer death upon the cross:  
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,

and also be made partakers of his resurrection;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*Bible Reading:* Mark 11: 1-11 read by Barbara Jennings

*A Reflection* by Penny Sutton

### **Returning the colt**

If I asked you individually to tell the story of Palm Sunday, I would probably hear different versions from each of you. None are wrong, it is simply that this is one of the few events reported in all four gospels. Each writer had a different emphasis and what is memorable to you may not be memorable to me. Each of us has our own composite version built in part, from each of the four gospels.

Today we are looking at the rather brief, 'pared back' version in Mark's gospel. His emphasis is on Jesus the King. He starts "as they approached Jerusalem.....". "They" we can assume are Jesus, his disciples, and a large crowd because, Ch10 v 46 tells us, that is who left Jericho together. This was Passover so groups of pilgrims were a common sight on the roads leading to Jerusalem. On this 12-mile walk the road climbs some 3800 feet; because Jericho is 800 feet below and Jerusalem 3000 feet above sea level. Today as you climb through the rocky desert there is a large rock beside the road with a line on it marking sea level. Bethany and Bethphage some two miles from Jerusalem mark the top of the incline where Jerusalem comes into view.

What does Mark tell us? The second part of v1 through to v8 are entirely concerned with the colt. That is 7 of 11 verses, two thirds of this account. Mark doesn't specify whether it was a horse or a donkey, we are just told it was an unbroken colt that the disciples were sent to fetch. In answer to any challenge, they were to say: "The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly". Remember that because Mark is the only gospel writer to record this undertaking. In common with the others, he records cloaks were spread over the back of the colt and laid on the road which was the traditional honour of welcome shown to a king, however the branches

here are not palm branches but merely branches cut from the fields. 'Hosannah' is a word of praise but it also means 'save us now'. These people are welcoming the coming king of David's line and the Kingdom of Israel, not the Kingdom of God.

Jesus rides into Jerusalem, enters the temple, looks round at everything and leaves. No actions or words reported here. He simply leaves and returns to Bethany as "it was already late". What an anti-climax! Mark must have had reasons for what he wrote. He is the only gospel writer to record this. So, we must ask, late for what? Surely it is more than simply the time of day. I think he was late returning the 'hire car'. Only Mark says Jesus promised to return the colt to its owner. To keep that promise he returned to Bethany. Jesus is being true to himself and keeping his word. He returned the colt. In view of all he faces in Holy Week a very small detail in the big picture, but Jesus is truly centred on the entire task before him.

For us this is the end of Lent. A season for self-examination inside and out when we need to look at everything. Maybe you have identified some 'baggage' you need to release or let go. Holy Week is the time to return and release it all to God. He can and will deal with it. That may also mean returning to ourselves, reclaiming our true self, the person God created us to be. Returning, releasing, and letting go. That is our 'Returning the colt'. Last week, in his reflection, Peter asked what is there in us that needs to die? Today we are asking the same question in a different way. This is the season of dying and rising again.

'Returning the colt' is how Holy Week begins. Returning to God and ourselves holds the promise of how this week will end. Let us follow the example of Jesus – look round at everything then go and 'return the colt'.

*Shona plays a verse of Dear Lord and Father of mankind*

Prayers of Intercession, led by Lynda Swain

At the start of our time of prayer, let us stop and be still.....

Let us consider the Lord to whom we bring our requests and pleas for help. Our Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of peace – Hosanna to the Son of David. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he or she, who comes in the name of the Lord.

*Let us be still and know that you are our God.*

Lord we live in a troubled world, with so many disasters both natural and manmade. Humankind has been a poor steward of your creation, neglecting to take care of what you have entrusted to us.

In our own country in recent weeks, we have had unrest and have been made to remember those who have lost their lives through violence or have been injured or traumatised by aggression and threat.

We have remembered those who have been lost to Covid-19. We also think of those who continue to be so unwell, and those who are bereaved. We consider too the financial, emotional, and mental health impacts of the pandemic.

*Lord, come and be present in this world we pray – **Amen.***

Give us vision Lord to look beyond the despair and pain. Help us to see you Lord amid the trouble. You are the light of the world; you have called us out of darkness into your glorious light. Help us to live as disciples of the light, bringing hope and transformation to a troubled world.

*Lord, help us to see with your light. **Amen.***

Lord, help us to hear your voice – the still small voice in our everyday life. Whether our days are full, or empty, or if we know struggle, or ease; let us take time each day to draw close to you. Help us to not just hear your voice, but to truly listen and know you, to follow you and trust in you.

*Lord, help us to listen to your voice. **Amen.***

Lord we pray for those in authority in our nation, give them strength and guidance. We pray for our leaders, especially those within the Church to know your empowerment. Raise up those who move in your Spirit to bring peace in times of trouble, wisdom in times of unknowing, and hope in times of uncertainty. Pour out your Spirit on us too, that we may be moved to action, to live and work to your praise and glory.

*Lord, help us to move in your Spirit. **Amen.***

As we look ahead to this Holy week, we are reminded how you took bread and wine in your hands to share with your disciples. In the garden of Gethsemane on the night you were arrested you healed one of those who came for you with a touch of your hand. Those who doubted your resurrection, were invited to touch your side, and feel the scars on your hands.

Let us pause and bring before God those we know who need that touch of love, healing or even forgiveness right now. ....

Oh Jesus, we ask for your healing touch on our troubled world, and may we be your hands here in our community – help us to reach out in love to a hurting world.

*Lord, help us to know your touch and to be your touch to others. **Amen.***

“Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Help us Lord to count our blessings, to see the riches of your grace that we can experience because we have put our hope in you – we have tasted and seen that the Lord is indeed good. Help us to be encouragers, to support those who are struggling in their faith, or with the practicalities of life. Remind us of what we have tasted with you and to be willing to share that good news with others, to bring them to your banqueting house to share in the feast.

*Lord, help us to taste and know that you are good. **Amen.***

Above all, help us Lord to be a pleasing aroma to all those around us. May we be people who bring your joy, love, hope and peace into whatever situation we are in, at home, at work, with friends and with

family. With our neighbours and our community, to the real world and within the virtual online world many of us inhabit these days.

May our actions and deeds; our posts, tweets, and shares; our words and our attitudes be a rich God-inspired life-giving fragrance, making a difference wherever we are.

*Lord, help us to be the aroma Christ. **Amen.***

Lord in your name, hear our prayers.

**Amen**

**We pray together the Lord's Prayer:** led by Simon Flower

Song: **Hosanna**

Sung & played by Hilary, Lesley, Richard G, Terry, Karen and Lynda

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.

Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

## Closing Prayers

May the Father,  
who so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
bring you by faith to his eternal life.

*All* **Amen.**

May Christ,  
who accepted the cup of sacrifice  
in obedience to the Father's will,  
keep you steadfast as you walk with him the way of his cross.

*All* **Amen.**

May the Spirit,  
who strengthens us to suffer with Christ  
that we may share his glory,  
set your minds on life and peace.

*All* **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

*All* **Amen.**

*Adrian plays 'All glory, laud and honour' in a setting by J S Bach (BWV 735/1 Valet will ich dir geben) of the tune we now call St. Theodulph.*

Bach brilliantly repeats the main tune in both the manual and pedal parts  
– maybe he was thinking of Theodulph's 8<sup>th</sup> century words

*.....To thee Redeemer, King*

*To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.*

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