

ABBAY INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, READING

10.30 am 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Bridget Gurney leading and Selina Chan preaching**

**Theme: Palm Sunday**



**Prayer** Be here Father, and help us to worship you in spirit and in truth.

**Family Time**

**Hymn BPW 64 Praise him, praise him** (During the singing of this hymn the collection will be taken)

Praise him, praise him, everybody praise him,  
he is love, he is love.

Thank him, thank him, everybody thank him,  
he is love, he is love.

Love him, love him, everybody love him,  
he is love, he is love.

Crown him, crown him, everybody crown him,  
he is love, he is love.

Serve him, serve him, everybody serve him,  
he is love, he is love.

Anon. (c.1890), altd.

**The children leave at this point, followed by a Prayer of Dedication**

**Call to Worship**

Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name. Make known amongst the nations what he has done.

**Sing to him, sing praise to him, tell of his wonderful acts.**

Glory in his holy name. Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

**Look to the Lord and his strength, seek his face always.**

**Hymn MP 242 Hosanna, Hosanna**

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*

### **Prayer of Praise**

We praise you Lord for your love, for your majesty and above all your love. You are our king, Master, Guide, the lover of our soul and our friend. You created the heavens and the earth, all that is beautiful and good.

**Father, we praise and worship you.**

### **Prayer of Confession**

Father, where do we begin to confess our wrong doings? We have made so many mistakes. We have tried to do things our way, and not your way. We have had the wrong attitude when we come to you. We have expected you to do what we want, not what you desire for us. Our thoughts have not been pure and good. Our words so often have not been pleasing to you.

**Lord, forgive us, cleanse us and renew us.**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

How can we thank you enough Lord? Your word says that when we confess to you our wrong ways, you are faithful and just and have forgiven us and cleansed us from all our wrongs. So thank you Lord for forgiving us and cleansing us. What a wonderful and loving Father you are.

**We give you all our praise and thanks. Amen**

### **Hymn BPW 589 Father God in Heaven - To be sung seated**

Father God in heaven,  
Lord most high:  
hear your children's prayer,  
Lord most high:  
hallowed be your name,  
Lord most high-  
O Lord, hear our prayer

May your kingdom come  
here on earth;  
may your will be done  
here on earth,  
as it is in heaven  
so on earth-  
O Lord, hear our prayer

Give us daily bread  
day by day,  
and forgive our sins  
day by day,  
as we too forgive  
day by day-  
O Lord, hear our prayer.

Lead us in your way,  
make us strong;  
when temptations come  
make us strong;  
save us from all sin,  
keep us strong-  
O Lord, hear our prayer.

All things come from you,  
all are yours-  
kingdom, glory, power,  
all are yours;  
take our lives and gifts,  
all are yours-  
O Lord, hear our prayer.

JAMES E. SEDDON (1915-83) from the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) / Mrs M. Seddon/Jubilate Hymns / CCL Licence Number: 1763

### **Bible Readings**

First Reading: Mark 11:1-11

Second Reading: Psalm 118:25-26; Philippians 2:6-8

### **Hymn BPW 225 Ride on! ride on in majesty!**

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die!  
O Christ, your triumphs now begin  
to capture death and conquer sin.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
While all the tribes `Hosanna' cry,  
they cast their garments at your feet  
and wave the palms their King to greet.

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 down your head to mortal pain,  
then take, O God, your power and reign!

H. H. MILMAN (1791-1868) / based on Matthew 21: 8-9 / CCL Licence Number: 1763

## **Palm Sunday Sermon - Mark 11:1-11**

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning. Today is Palm Sunday, a day of immense joy and deep significance for Christians worldwide. It marks the beginning of Holy Week, the most sacred time in our faith, culminating in Jesus' death and victorious resurrection. On this day, Jesus was welcomed as a king, yet just days later, He was crucified. This paradox calls us to reflect on *the true nature of Christ's kingship and His mission of salvation*.

The Gospel of Mark (11:1-11) records this grand yet humble procession of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, where the people waved palm branches and laid their cloaks on the road, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:9). This moment echoes the following Scripture: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord, we bless you." (Psalm 118:26). But you may question -- what did this triumphal entry truly signify? And why did the same voices that praised Him later demand His crucifixion? We are going to explore the deep meanings behind Palm Sunday and how it leads us to the Cross and ultimately to the Resurrection.

### **I. The Significance and Symbolism of Palm Sunday**

The spreading of cloaks and palm branches before Jesus symbolized honour and recognition of royalty. In 2 Kings 9:13, people laid their garments before Jehu as he was anointed king. This act for Jesus signified His Kingship, though in a way far different from earthly rulers.

Palms were a symbol of victory and peace. The people at that time mistakenly thought Jesus would bring them political salvation from Roman oppression, but in fact, *Christ came to bring spiritual salvation*. The cry of "Hosanna!" means "Save us now!" The people were calling for deliverance, but they failed to understand that the salvation Jesus brought was not of a political kingdom but of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my Kingdom is from another place." (John 18:36).

### **II. Fulfilment of Old Testament Prophecies**

Dear brothers and sisters, let's admit that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was not a coincidence; *it was the fulfilment of God's divine plan*. Several Old Testament prophecies pointed directly to this moment:

Zechariah 9:9 prophesied, "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey," Isaiah 62:11 foretold, "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your Saviour comes!'" The manner in which Jesus entered—on a donkey instead of a warhorse—was a fulfilment of these prophecies, showing that *His reign was one of peace, not of military conquest*. Psalm 118:25-26 anticipated the cries of the people, affirming that the coming of the Messiah would be greeted with shouts of "Hosanna!"

### **III. False Expectations and Opposition to Jesus' Kingship**

The crowd that welcomed Jesus was eager for a Messiah, but they misunderstood His mission. Many expected a warrior king like David, one who would overthrow Rome and restore Israel to political power. Yet, *Jesus came as the King of peace, bringing salvation from sin rather than military victory*.

Having said that, some religious leaders viewed His entrance as a threat. In Luke 19:39, some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" They feared the growing influence of Jesus and sought to silence Him. The Roman authorities saw the idea of another "king" as a potential rebellion, making Jesus a target for those in power. When Jesus later cleansed the temple (Mark 11:15-18), it further angered the religious elite, who saw Him as a disruptor rather than the true Messiah.

The shift from celebration to condemnation happened because Jesus did not conform to their expectations. They wanted a political king; *He came as the suffering servant* (Isaiah 53:3-7). When they realized He would not lead an uprising, many turned against Him.

#### IV. Jesus' Humility in His Triumphal Entry

Have you noticed that Jesus, the King of kings, entered not with grandeur but in humility? He rode on a donkey, a symbol of peace and servitude.

Philippians 2:6-8 says, "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant." *Jesus' Kingship is one of love, sacrifice, and servanthood.* "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45).

#### V. From Cheers to Crucifixion – Why the Change?

The same people who shouted "Hosanna!" later cried, "Crucify Him!" (Mark 15:13-14). Why?

Jesus' teachings challenged the status quo. *He exposed hypocrisy, overturned corrupt religious systems, and called for repentance.* The religious leaders plotted against Him because His growing influence threatened their authority (Luke 22:2). Judas, one of His own disciples, betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16). Pilate, though recognizing Jesus' innocence, gave in to the demands of the crowd to crucify Him (John 19:12-16).

#### VI. The Cross and the Hope of the Resurrection

Palm Sunday sets the stage for the greatest act of love ever known—*Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.* Though the people expected a king who would reign in power, Jesus conquered in a greater way—*by dying for the sins of the world and rising again in victory.*

"But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5). "He is not here; He has risen, just as He said." (Matthew 28:6). *His resurrection gives us true hope and victory over sin and death.*

Dear brothers and sisters, to conclude today's sermon, *Palm Sunday reminds us to receive Jesus as He truly is—not just a temporary deliverer, but the Saviour of our souls.* As we enter the Holy Week, *let us reflect on the depth of His Love and the cost of our Salvation.* **Are we willing to follow Jesus Christ, even when His Path leads to the Cross?**

#### Prayer for Holy Week

Heavenly Father, as we enter this sacred week, open our hearts to fully grasp the depth of Christ's love and sacrifice. Forgive us when we, like the crowd, fail to recognize Jesus for who He truly is. **Help us to walk in humility, repentance, and gratitude. May we not just celebrate Jesus in moments of joy but follow Him even when the path leads to the Cross. Strengthen our faith and prepare us to celebrate the victory of the resurrection. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

#### Hymn BPW 222 Listen to the shouts of praises!

Listen to the shouts of praises!  
someone great is coming here,  
riding to the holy city,  
nearer now—the people cheer.  
Jesus Christ, the King, is coming;  
crowds are pouring down the street.  
Raise your branches, all you children,  
shout with joy and stamp your feet.

Now we see him-gentle Jesus,  
healer of the lame and blind,  
humbly riding on a donkey,

friend of children, good and kind.  
Look, he comes, the promised Saviour;  
round him loud hosannas ring:  
welcome him, you waiting people,  
welcome Christ, your Lord and King!

MOLLIE KNIGHT based on Matthew 21: 7-9 / © M. Knight/Jubilate Hymns / CCL Licence Number: 1763

### **Prayers – Eva Suen**

**\*\*May we see the world with the heart of Jesus Christ and with Your eyes. May You give us a humble and obedient heart.\*\***

Lord, we pray especially for the current war between Russia and Ukraine. May You grant peace and end the conflict. May all suffering people be comforted and healed. May Your justice and love be manifested in this land. Please protect innocent lives and grant leaders the wisdom to seek peaceful solutions.

We also pray for the earthquake in Myanmar. Please have mercy on us and comfort those who have lost their homes and loved ones. Please give strength to the rescue workers so that they can effectively help those affected by the disaster. May Your love and hope fill every heart during this difficult time.

Lord, we also pray for the situation in Hong Kong. Please grant wisdom and peace so that all leaders can govern with justice and love. May the people of Hong Kong live in freedom and harmony. Please protect every heart so that they can find hope and strength in the midst of difficulties.

Lord, we also pray especially for Abbey Baptist Church. May You grant wisdom and strength to the church's leaders and congregants, so that they can be firm in their faith, love one another, play the role of light and salt in the community, spread your gospel, and support each other in difficulties. May your blessings always be with them, allowing their ministries to prosper and become a blessing to the spiritual growth of more people.

We thank You for Your grace, for granting us the opportunity to engage in outreach evangelism in Reading on April 18 and 19. We ask that You be with us during this event, granting us wisdom and courage to clearly proclaim Your Word.

We pray that You touch the hearts of every participant, enabling them to reach out to those in need with love and enthusiasm.

**\*\*May our actions reflect Your light, allowing more people to know Your love and salvation.\*\***

Please protect our safety and give us strength, so that we may not lose heart in difficulties, but continue to trust in Your guidance. May this outreach bear abundant fruit, bringing more souls to You.

**\*\*We give all glory to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.\*\***

We also pray for the recent disasters and conflicts around the world, including extreme weather, floods, droughts, etc. caused by climate change. Please heal and enable affected communities to rebuild and recover. Please grant wisdom to leaders around the world so they can effectively respond to these challenges and provide support to the people affected.

In addition, Lord, we also pray for the impact of the tariff war. Please grant wisdom to leaders

around the world so they can find peaceful and cooperative ways to reduce the impact of trade tensions and protect workers and families affected by trade policies. May all countries be able to establish better economic relations based on mutual benefit and promote global prosperity and peace.

We also continue to pray for the global epidemic. Please grant healing and comfort to all those affected so that they can recover soon. Please also grant medical workers strength and wisdom so that they can continue to serve in this difficult time.

**\*\*Aaron's Blessing\*\***

Finally, let's serve one another with the Aaron's blessing:

**May the Lord bless you,  
and keep you.**

**May the Lord make His face shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you,**

**May the Lord turn His face toward you,  
and give you peace.**

**Hymn BPW 216 All glory, praise and honour**

All glory, praise and honour,  
to you, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.

You are the King of Israel,  
great David's greater Son;  
you ride in lowly triumph,  
the Lord's anointed one!

The company of angels  
are praising you on high,  
and we with all creation  
together, make reply:

The people of the Hebrews  
with palms before you went;  
our praise and prayer and anthems  
before you we present:

To you before your Passion  
they sang their hymns of praise;  
to you, now high exalted,  
our melody we raise:

As you received their praises,  
accept the prayers we bring,  
for you delight in goodness  
O good and gracious King!

## **Blessing**

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to prevent you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy, to the only God your Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and evermore. Amen.

## **The Grace**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.**

**Fair Trade stall open after the service!**

## **Notices for Holy Week and Easter**

**Good Friday April 18th at 10.30** at Abbey: A quiet hour to reflect on the meaning of the day.

**Good Friday and Easter Saturday April 19th** 11 - 1pm we will be outside St Laurence Church at the back of Marks and Spencer's. There will be music, dance, refreshments and opportunity to share your faith and invite people to the afternoon play in the Forbury Gardens.

**Good Friday at 3pm and Easter Saturday at 2.30 pm** Easter story drama open air in the Forbury Gardens - a professional theatre company will perform. Ask your non-Christian friends to this event. There will also be art, kids' activities, refreshments etc.

**Good Friday 12 noon** outside front of Marks and Spencer's - Easter hymn singing - come and join in.

**Easter Sunday April 20th** 8am open air service in the Forbury Gardens followed by refreshments in Abbey church.

Then at 10.30 we have our own **Easter morning Resurrection Celebration** followed by lunch.