

Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem
Palm Sunday
25 March 2018

The Gospel of John 12:12-16

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³ They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!^[a]"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"^[b]

"Blessed is the king of Israel!"

¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

¹⁵ "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;

see, your king is coming,

seated on a donkey's colt."^[c]

¹⁶ At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.



Hymn 283 from "Singing the Faith"

*V1. The desolate Messiah dies
stretched out upon the cross:
unwanted by the earth he made,
death's trophy for the world displayed
and, as the final scene is played,
all hope is lost.*

There is nothing new under the sun! Throughout the ages people and nations have fought over the eternal city of Jerusalem, it has been under occupation down through the ages. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem it was an occupied divided city, as it is today. People were looking for a political figure in the long awaited Messiah to bring about deliverance and freedom. The event of Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem is recorded in each of the gospels. John records the account of Lazarus being raised from the dead, and how the crowd had come to behold the risen man and Him who had raised him the day before his triumphant entry. Those in authority and with power plotted to have both men killed for fear of the great crowds following and believing in him. Perhaps they tried to control the crowd that day but they could not prevent them from raising their palm branches and declaring "Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, blessed is the king of Israel" fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy of the King coming to Jerusalem in righteousness and victory. The prophecy speaks of the one who would take away the warhorses of Jerusalem. The battle bow would be broken and peace would be proclaimed to the nations, his rule would extend to the nations and to the ends of the world (Zech 9 v 9-10). Jesus had entered Jerusalem many times, that day he entered Jerusalem as its King riding lowly on a colt in victory. He was not offered the keys to the city, he was offered palm branches that have ever been an emblem of victory and triumph. It was a time when people faced occupation by their enemies and those in power. They came to Jesus looking for resurrection from their oppressors as Lazarus had been resurrected. They looked to Jesus and cried out Hosanna, save us now! Jesus came to save not as they expected, as a political leader, but as the Son of God who saves from occupation of the oppression of sin, disease, power, rulers and authorities and ultimately death. He rode in victory over all that occupies us.

This time last year I was critically ill. My body was infected with the dengue virus caused by a mosquito bite, my blood count was so low I had internal bleeding causing various complications. I awoke in the middle of the night in the hospital bed and believed the Lord said "this is a day of victory and turn around" I had no idea what day it was! Then I realised it was Palm Sunday. I began to consider that night the significance of Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem as a moment of victory, it was his coronation as king. I knew that night that although I was peaceful in the face of being critically ill, the Lord was seeking me to gaze upon him and the victory that was his. That whatever reports I heard as my blood count dropped, whatever I saw in the natural to put my hope and trust in him. Jesus rode in victory all the way to the cross, where he bled for humanity. He conquered death and was raised leaving behind an empty tomb. It was indeed a day of deliverance and victory as there was a turn around in my health and I was on the road to recovery. That night on my sickbed I waved my palm branch of praise to the King of Kings, and remembered the words written "do not be afraid, daughter of Zion, see your King comes riding on a colt"

A great crowd continues to arrive in Jerusalem every year to enact that great procession, holding their palms and shouting "Hosanna" They travel to a land still under occupation and divided, to a city where no one holds the key to the city but the King of Kings.

Let us pray: Lord, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem and for all nations, for all who are under occupation at this time.

For those whose lives have been occupied by fear, hopelessness, sickness, loneliness, homelessness and abuse in all its forms. For those who face death without hope of resurrection. **Hosanna!**

We pray for all who are under occupation separated by walls of injustice, and systems of power that cause desperation. We pray for the weak and vulnerable in society and all who are oppressed, for those who do not experience life in all its fullness. **Hosanna!** We take our eyes off all that causes us fear and despondency and gaze on your majesty, putting our hope and trust in you. King of Kings, we thank you that you did and do save us. **Hosanna in the highest! Amen.**

Devotions written by: Angleena Keizer

Lent Devotions provided by the Methodist Liaison office in Jerusalem, through the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, The Methodist Church of Great Britain, and the World Methodist Council of Churches. www.methodist-liaison.org