

The Parish of Wellow

A walk through the Bible with the people of God

2. Jesus the King

Matthew 21: 1-11

Passage, Sermon Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these sermon notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Sermon Passage

Matthew 21:1-11

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples,
2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.

3 If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

5 "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

7 They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.

8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

11 The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

2. Sermon Notes

2.1 The crowds lining the streets as Jesus makes his triumphal entry in Jerusalem proclaim him King with three important signs:

- i. The cloaks they spread. (verse 8a)
- ii. The palm s they wave. (verses 8b)
- iii. The hymns they sing. (verse 9)

2.2 The cloaks they spread. (verse 8a)

- Those who knew their Bibles would have remembered the story well that when one of Israel's famous kings of old was proclaimed king in defiance of the existing one, his followers spread their cloaks under new king's feet as a sign of loyalty .

2.3 The palm s they wave. (verses 8b)

- The palms they waved carried 'royal' implications.
- In the long folk-memory of Jerusalem and its surrounding villages, stories were still told about the famous Judas Maccabaeus who, 200 years before, had arrived in Jerusalem after conquering the pagan armies that had oppressed Israel.
- He, too, was welcomed into the city by a crowd waving palm branches.
- He was the start of a royal dynasty that lasted for over a hundred years.

2.4 The hymns they sing. (verse 9)

- The crowds sang 'royal' hymns welcoming Jesus as the 'son of David.'
- There was nothing subtle about this. Singing these royal hymns was about as explicit as you could get; this was, after all, the city which King David had made his capital a thousand years before, and for nearly half that time the Jews had been waiting and praying for a king like David to arrive and save them from oppression.

2.5 Jesus knows he has come to Jerusalem for a different purpose.

- Jesus has come to Jerusalem, not to be enthroned like David, or like Judas Maccabaeus, or like Herod, but to be killed.
- The meaning Jesus attaches to this so-called 'triumphal entry' is quite different from the meaning that the crowd want to see in it.

2.6 This mismatch between the crowds' expectations and God's answer has a great deal to teach us today.

- Many of us only turn to God when there is something that we want very badly.
- Church attendance goes up in leaps and bounds when a major crisis strikes - a war, say, or an earthquake.
- Suddenly everyone wants Jesus 'to ride into the city' and become the sort of king they want him to be.
- God loves us and delights to answer our prayer but often he answers our prayer in a much deeper way than we expect. That is because God does it in his way rather than in ours.
- The crowds waving their palms that day wanted a prophet, but this prophet would tell them that their city was under God's imminent judgment.
- They wanted a Messiah, but this one was going to be enthroned on a pagan cross.
- They wanted to be rescued from evil and oppression, but Jesus was going to rescue them from evil in its full depths, not just the surface evil of Roman occupation and the exploitation by the rich.
- Precisely because God says 'yes' to their desires at the deepest level, he will have to say 'no' or 'wait' to their immediate desires for a king to come in and boot out the hated Roman oppressors.
- That's the funny thing with prayer. Once we invite God to help, he will do so more thoroughly than we ever imagined, more deeply than perhaps we want.

3. Questions to consider back at home

3.1 The crowds had clearly missed the deeper meaning of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Is God challenging you to go deeper with him? Is God challenging you to pray more or to go deeper into his word?

3.2 The crowds welcome Jesus' sovereignty on Palm Sunday but by Good Friday they are calling for Jesus to be crucified. Are there areas in your life that you need to submit to God's sovereignty and authority?

3.3 A close Christian friend says to you one day that she has been praying to God for weeks about a certain problem in her life but God doesn't seem to answer. How would you respond?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293