

# Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023 10 am

Palm Sunday – Why are you cheering Him? What does He mean to you?

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Welcome Opening Scripture / prayer

Hymn MP 457 Make way make way

Scripture Psalm 118 (page 616)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk Seeing Jesus as he is, visual puzzle, John 14:9, (8:24)

Chorus MP MP 545 Open our eyes

MP 242 Hosanna

MP 167 give me oil in my lamp.....sing hosanna

Notices Go through week plan, invite for Wed, Come on Tuesday, etc

No house-group, Fellowship lunch after the service. Dressed ready for service. Prepared for works of service Eph 4. 11am Next Sunday

Hand out palm crosses

*Communion*

Reading Matthew 21:1-11 (page 988)

Zechariah 9:1-10 (page 954)

Hymn Redeemed! (As below)

Sermon Why are you cheering Him? Who is he? What does He mean to you?

Hymn MP 295 I serve a risen saviour

Closing Prayer Psalm 118:15-16

Close

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## Prayer & Exordium

- Rico Tice in his Christianity Explored session 2 video – 'Identity' speaks about being invited out to lunch, and being a bit early he waits on the stairs. Standing opposite was another man. "I vaguely recognised him" he said "but thought nothing of it. So as English people do, we gave each other a sheepish nod and stood there awkwardly for five minutes in total silence. A man then came from around the corner, looked up at the man beside me and explained to William they were in the private dining room. Turns out, it was Prince William. Sadly, all I saw was a handsome well dressed 25 year old with thinning blonde hair. What I didn't see was my future king. In William's case missing his identity doesn't really matter. I just missed out on a once in a lifetime conversation, And arguably so did he. But that's about it. Sometimes though, getting someone's identity right really does matter. Not to get Jesus's identity, to miss this king's identity would be disastrous."

**When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" x2** What did they say? Had they understood his identity? Have you?

Yes it's Palm Sunday today – the time we remember Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, He's on his way to the cross. It's a familiar passage, with familiar messages, etc., were there some in the crowd praising him one day and shouting "crucify him" a week later?

It is clearly important as all the four gospel writers take notice of Christ's riding into Jerusalem five days before his death.

Jesus' public arrival into Jerusalem is important as it fulfils the OT prophet's prediction 400 years earlier particularly Zechariah 9:9, easy to remember.

- If you were a reporter and you went up to the cheering crowd and put your microphone under a few noses and asked: "Why are you cheering Him?" Who is he? And "What does He mean to you?" I wonder what answers you would have had. What would you say?

These OT foreshadowings throw light on what is really happening here.

Malachi 3:1 **See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.**

For example in Genesis when Jacob at the end of his life makes predictions about his sons he says: **"The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs - and the obedience of the nations is his."** Genesis 49:10

The kingdom was established under David, David being a type and forerunner of his descendant King Jesus. The kingdom continues from David – albeit with some breaks – until Jesus. Then with the destruction of the country of Israel it ends. Jesus has a new kingdom of people from across the world, we can see who they are for they are obedient to the king **the obedience of the nations is his**. Here are the called men and women of faith, Paul says: **“Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.”** Rom 1:5

Another passage also from Zechariah, 12:10 says: **“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced,** Zechariah 12:10 The Passover was on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month, and this was the 10<sup>th</sup>. On this 10<sup>th</sup> day the law required that the sacrificial lamb should be presented, set apart for offering (Ex 12:3). On that day therefore Christ our Passover lamb, who was to be sacrificed for us, was publicly showed to be set apart.

Jesus approached the city but he was not like any other King. It was standard practice for a triumphant King to return from his campaign and in a procession enter the capitol city before a train of booty, captured treasures and captured slaves humiliated and strung together, a powerful display of his dominance. The crowds would cheer as he lifted the nation’s pride, power and prowess in their eyes, here willing devotees rejoiced over their champion king returning from victory.

But Jesus was a humble King, a suffering King, one so different from the powerful Kings and generals who have strutted the globe parading their victories. Jesus is not high up on an impressive Arabian charger, no his feet are shuffling along the ground on a donkey’s colt. Here is a different King to what you would normally see. A different king - of a different kingdom.

Here were no heralds at arms, no trumpet sounding before him, no chariots of state, no liveries; all this have no place in his present state of humiliation.

One day x2 – when he returns in Glory at his second coming, we will hear the last trumpet shall sound, the glorious angels will be his heralds and attendants, and the clouds his chariots. But not now. x2

✚ In this public appearance Christ’s kingdom will be brought in through his emmense personal suffering.

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✚ The crowds would be trying to reconcile what they expected with what they saw.

It’s the same today x2. I could put together a long list of those who have initially been interested in Jesus but then when they come and learn a little more then – it is not what they expected, it is not what they hoped for.

■ So again what would people say into the reporter’s microphone?

The crowds were a heady mix of people. There were 6 **The disciples** (who) **went and did as Jesus had instructed them.** v7 **They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.**

There were many others, v8 **A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.**

Some are in front of Jesus - and some following v9 **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!"**

John tells us that there were those there who had seen Lazarus raised from the dead and they were there busy spreading the word of this miracle.

John also speaks of **“the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.** The are already in the city getting ready for the Passover and come out to meet the crowds coming towards them. **They took palm branches** (probably left over from the feast of Tabernacles) **and went out to meet him,** John 12:12-13

There are also all around those ‘tut tutting’ pharisees.

So there we have it, a real mix of people - Different people, different expectations, different hopes, different desires.

A real mix – as you are here this morning

■ What would you say to the reporter’s question this morning “Who is this? And “What does He mean to you?” What would you say?

You haven’t been cheering but you have been singing the songs and saying Amen to the prayers.

What were they saying? Or rather shouting? **"Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"** Matthew 21:8-9

They had been thinking of Psalm 118. What is the psalm about? It is about salvation. **Hosanna** means ‘save’

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But saved from what? I remember the previous pastor asking us all what are we saved from? Several gave answers. We are saved of course from a controlling power, an enemy, but who or what is your enemy?

It is popular today to talk about oppressors and victims, well many in the crowd on that day thought like that too.

The crowd shout praise as they hope Jesus to be the One promised, the true Messiah, the Christ, the powerful King coming to help them. The Jews had a national heritage, God was their God, they were His people and His writings were their writings. This greatly affected the national psyche. They had had a troubled history, their powerful neighbours had oppressed them cruelly; the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians then the Greeks. Wild and violent days had continued; now they were little better off under the Roman yoke. The restoration of the kingdom, the return to the glory days, the removal of the foreign power, was this the fulfilment of their long hoped for dreams? John recalls that earlier some had tried to make him king by force John 6:13. This is their answer to the question "what does he mean to me".

Are there some here today who think maybe there is some power here. There are churches who promote health and prosperity, they see King Jesus as the one who came to remove poverty, remove illness. Other churches have healing services, and it is obvious why people come forward at these.

Is this someone who has the power to improve my lot, to heal me, to help me, one I can pray to - to make things go well for me. Statistically those who come to church are healthier, live longer, etc and generally fare better. Do you like that? Does coming to church help you avoid the social ills that others so easily to succumb to, and maybe you once did. Would you say: "that's what he mean to me".

Some looked to Jesus to restore the nation's dignity. You don't think nationally but personally, He brings me purpose and value, here is a safe forum for me, I can belong and prosper socially. Here I can have a place, a position, I am noticed and appreciated. People here take interest in me. Jesus can champion my cause. "That" you say "is what he means to me".

If those who come on Sunday morning to feel better, or for a sense of purpose, or for friendship, or for belonging, didn't come, who would be left?

The government tends to recognise the church on the basis of the charity work we do. "Care in the community". Sadly more and more churches are

primarily about social improvement, what's called liberation theology. Tackling the enemy of injustice, inequality, social discord, loneliness, etc.

✚ This King is of a different kingdom – he confronts a different enemy, and this different king will bring a different victory.

Jesus did not come to help me with what I think I need, but what I really need. He came to bring me peace with God. That's neither easy nor cheap. He came that you and I could be squared with God our maker - before that dreadful day of Judgment comes.... And it will come.

✚ Please understand the Gospel. Salvation, - being saved - only really makes sense when you realise it is being saved from Judgment.

**Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners x2 1 Tim 1:15 That is why he came x2**

Your great enemy is guilt. Everyone. It is that he came to conquer. Those unseen enemies; Guilt and it's corollary death, death the result of sin or guilt.

Behind guilt is the accuser and his pointing finger towards you and I as law breakers, sinners, people desperately in need of a strong defense before God.

The Devil stands as the prosecution. And he has a very compelling case – Looking towards the Judge he says – pointing at me – and at you - should you not judge the guilty? If you do not then you are not Just. Yes the Judge of all men will do what is right – and he will condemn the guilty. What bad news for you and I. *Oh how Satan gleans*, hell has been prepared for the Devil and all his demons – he wants to take as many others to hell with him. How many of the unsuspecting will he drag to Hell. Can you hear the screams?

He deceives the foolish who are dupped into believing he, Satan, does not exist, hell does not exist, Judgment is not real, and there's nothing I need to do. He doesn't mind you 'believing in God', a meaningless phrase. But what you must not do – says the devil – is turn in repentance to the Saviour Jesus.

Christ came to rescue sinners from his clutches through his own triumph on the cross **And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.** Col2:15 *Praise You*

Christ is our champion, x2 the true son of Adam - to help our helpless race. Jesus saves, He's the strong One who stands perfect in my place, in my defense - before God.

This is what was predicted in Zech 9:9 says “**Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation.** But what are they being saved from? Turn to...

Zechariah 9 (p 954) - v1 and on the Lord is declaring that he is against his enemies in Hardarch, Damascus, Tyre and Sidon, and those Philistine cities of ... these are all the enemies suppressing God's people. Tyre, the King of Tyre is a picture of Satan himself. (see Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah Chapter 14)

These physical oppressors picture the spiritual oppression. What Paul tells us are **the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**” Eph 6:12

✚ These he says are your unseen enemies. Read around these OT predictions and it makes sense out of what Jesus came to do.

So too with the other passage quoting from Psalm 118 the crowds shout “**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!**” Please turn to it. P. 616 **the name of the Lord!**” it is with him that those surround enemies are cut off v10,11, no wonder they rejoice in the Lord 14 **The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.** The psalm is about salvation.

And who is the one who saves? 15 “**The LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!** 16 **The LORD’s right hand is lifted high; the LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!**” three times it’s complete.

Jesus is the one at the Lord’s right hand, it is he who works salvation and what do those who receive it do, rejoice, rejoice - 15 **Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous**

He had made them righteous and that means right with God, yes at peace with God my maker, they confidently say to themselves and each other 17 **I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.** x2

✚ Can you say that? Do we hear it from your lips? Is it a living reality that you want to tell the world about?

The Risen lord through his painful death on the cross has made a way - and now there is a door by which I can enter - 19 **Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.** 20 **This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.**

Is there someone here still to call out to him? Do so. When you do you will say 21 **I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.** Then you will be able to say to the question “what does he mean

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to me”. This is what he has done for me He has saved by soul from death. Who is this, Who is He, he is MY Lord and My Saviour”

It is the greatest of news, peace with God is the great release, the great Joy.

- “What is the best news you have ever heard” ask CE at the beginning. Someone said recently it was hearing of being able to leave for England after 8 years in a refugee camp, the joy of it.

Peace with God means the end of hostilities. WWII came to an end as British and American forces liberated prison camp after prison camp in the West. The Soviet Army marched from the East, the German were in great fear, but 1000s of POWs eagerly anticipated their arrival.

- The 2011 film “long march to freedom” recounts the testimony of those POWs who survived a gruelling march from their Eastern camp westward. Hear what they say about being liberated by the Allies.

- ... the tanks came near and we noticed the star, they were American,... they were absolutely wonderful. Oh, we were cheering and shouting. I was getting over come ... Really, what relief, it seemed almost a dream. We were loose but it hadn't sunk in, I couldn't explain the exhilaration or the joy of being free. After all that time is it something that actually numbs you. We just stood there we couldn't believe that there was going to be no more guards no more pushing around. Still filled with emotion all those years later

**A Christian’s enemy has been defeated, my sin has gone, God’s justice has been satisfied, Satan and been disarmed, and I am free to enjoy God.**

Wonderful. Who is this, “who is he?” Yes he is MY Lord and My Saviour”

Jesus 22 **The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;** 23 **the LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes.** 24 **This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Those who follow him are called to forsake self and serve this wonderful King. Let it be seen that we belongs to him - in that we do this gladly.

Let us do that this coming week and proclaim the suffering and the risen victorious champion. **Let this morning be a service before services.**

Let’s have hearts full of praise as we sing our final song. 295 I serve a risen saviour read v3

We are not cheering crowds but singing the songs of salvation, understand what it is we are singing about – and who it is we are singing to, real life with God is found in Christ and in him alone.

END

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