

**Simple Prayer, Simple Praise:
A Worship Service for Sunday, April 5, 2020 (Palm Sunday)**

Opening Prayer: (Psalm 118:25-29)

Hosannah, LORD, hosannah! *

LORD, send us now success.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; *

we bless you from the house of the LORD.

God is the LORD; he has shined upon us; *

form a procession with branches up to the horns of the altar.

"You are my God, and I will thank you; *

you are my God, and I will exalt you."

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; *

his mercy endures for ever.

A reading from the Gospel According to Matthew (21:1-11)

When Jesus and his disciples had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

"Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"



When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Meditation

At first this crowd appeared aligned with the disciples, welcoming a charismatic and important leader as in triumph. Their expectation is for a king who will overthrow their oppressor, and bring justice and prosperity to the people. In the blink of an eye, the crowd's expectations are shattered—Jesus is “revealed” as an ordinary guy without any power or authority. In that realization, he appears a fraud, a blasphemer. A threat.

The funny thing is, viewed with 20/20 hindsight (or '2020 'hindsight, perhaps), the crowd's expectations weren't wrong at all—they just didn't *know* it. Jesus *proved* himself King of Glory. Jesus *did indeed* overthrow Death, our oppressor. Jesus *does* bring justice and prosperity to humankind in the eternal life which he has won for us.

Where the crowd failed was in their persistent belief that *their* ways were God's ways as well. They (and we) need ongoing reminders that God is always free to do a new thing; to turn adversity upside down, to send his only begotten son to die in disgrace, to raise the dead to life.

Recently, we all have become edgy without our regular comforts and routines; and unsure of the future and the health of our loved ones. Rest assured, although we cannot comprehend how we'll get out of this mess, we have faith that God already has a plan for us. That plan involves the same goodness, mercy, and abundance that we expect, yet it may be made real in ways we cannot now anticipate. God's plan is as radical as a poor preacher revealed as the Son of God; and as death defying as an empty tomb ringed with Easter lilies.

Let us now walk steadfastly beside our Lord today on his path to the Cross, so that we may be witnesses later to the new life that awaits in the revelation of the Resurrection; we ask this in Jesus 'name, Amen.

(by The Rev. Claudia Scheda, Rector, St. David's- West Seneca)

Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, do not let us walk this difficult road alone. Let us be thankful for the companions we meet along the way who sustain us; the healers we meet who tend our ills; the children we meet who bring us joy; and allow us your grace so that we may be privileged to assist those who walk beside us in any way we can.

Amen.

Take a moment now for silent reflection. Think of the people and things that cause you worry or concern; think of the things for which you are grateful. Raise them up in prayer using the words our Savior Christ taught us:

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed by thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory
for ever and ever.
Amen.**



Grace:

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Engage in these five simple Thankfulness Exercises every day for stress relief and spiritual renewal: Express gratitude. Plan a positive outlook. Take five deep breaths. Smile. Forgive your mistakes.

Holy Week Online Worship Schedule:

Palm Sunday: April 5 at 10 a.m.

Tenebrae: April 8 at 7 p.m.

Maundy Thursday: April 9 at 7 p.m.

Good Friday: April 10 at 7 p.m.

Holy Saturday: April 11 at 10 a.m.

Easter Sunday: April 12 at 10 a.m.

Anyone can join the services using this link: <https://zoom.us/j/127336938> or by calling **646-876-9923** and using code **127336938#**.

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise is produced for The Episcopal Dioceses of NWPA and WNY
by the Rev. Steve Lane and the Rev. Claudia Scheda, and guest contributors as noted.
April 2020.