**The Lord Enters the Community**

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April 1, 2018

 Now Holy Week; here is a time for us when we walk with Jesus into Jerusalem. We know he is going to die. He himself said he was going to die.

Holy Week is one of the most significant times in the life and faith of a Christian community. We are entering this week on this Palm Sunday by joining Jesus on his journey to the cross. We are literally joining him because he is entering our live. His earthly journey is coming to an end through many agonizing events.

This week is a time when we participate in Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and in some churches, Holy Saturday. All these services lead us to Sunday when joy comes in the morning.

Christians from around the world enter the city of Jerusalem during Holy Week. Thousands of Christians make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. There is singing of songs of Christ’s passion, the processions of palm waving and cross bearing which give witness to the events of the week. The gathering of the faithful is made known worldwide and we going to be part of those events. Maybe some of you here today have walked the via dolorosa which literally means, “The Sorrowful Way.”

Today, the telling of the Lord’s experience leads us to enter the city with him.

 The first eight verses of John 12 tell of Jesus’ coming to Jerusalem by way of Bethany. While there, Mary anoints him with costly ointment as a way to prepare him for his burial. Of course, Judas complains that the money spent on the ointment could have been used to feed the poor. **7Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. 8You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”**

 The word spread throughout the region that Jesus was in Bethany and was preparing to enter the city of Jerusalem the next day to celebrate the Passover. The anticipation of him entering the city was strong especially after how he had raised Lazarus from the dead. The people also wanted to see Lazarus. They knew that a Great Physician, Savior and Messiah had arrived. They wanted to see for themselves the healing and raised Lazarus from the dead. Because he could do the same for them and for us.

So the stage is set for Christ’s triumphant entrance into the community of Jerusalem. The Gospel of John chapter 12:12-16 shares the story, **12The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 13So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!”** The reception the Lord received brings the fulfillment of prophecy together as it is found in Psalm 118:26.

The Greek form of the Hebrew phrase *hosanna,* "Hosanna" was the [term](http://www.answers.com/topic/hosanna) used by the people to acclaim Jesus on his entry into Jerusalem on that day. Hosanna! Hosanna! In Psalm 118:25, it is translated "save now" and, as in the gospels, is followed by the phrase "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Psalm 118:26 was used liturgically at the Feast of Tabernacles, and verse 25 was the cue for the waving of the palm branches. (bible dictionary and concordance)

Further fulfillment of prophecy comes when Zechariah 9:9 proclaims how the Messiah would make his way into the city. Scripture says, **14Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: 15“Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”**

The Messiah, the Savior of all, would come into the city on a lowly donkey. The humblest of God’s creatures is the one who brought the Savior as he entered the community of Jerusalem. The Lord did not ride a white horse nor did he ride in front of a legion of warriors. He entered in lowliness to be with ordinary people in a celebration of faith. Just like he enters our lives as a humble Savior.

Many people question whether Jesus should go to Jerusalem and endure death. Even to this day people say, “Why did go? If he knew he was going to die, why didn’t he just take another route?”

Scripture teaches us in Matthew 16:21-22 that even one of his disciples tried to persuade him otherwise. **21From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22And peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.”**

 The truth is that Jesus was willing to be an obedient servant for God. Even the prophet Isaiah wrote of God’s obedient and suffering servant in Isaiah 50:4-9a. Again, the prophecy of old brings fulfillment of the Messiah who is to come. Please reflect on the words that Isaiah writes, **4The Sovereign Lord has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know what to say to all these weary ones. Morning by morning he wakens me and opens my understanding to his will. 5The Sovereign Lord has spoken to me, and I have listened. I do not rebel or turn away.**

**6I give my back to those who beat me and my cheeks to those who pull out my beard. I do not hide from shame, for they mock me and spit in my face.**

**7Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be dismayed. Therefore, I have set my face like a stone, determined to do his will. And I know that I will triumph. 8He who gives me justice is near. Who will dare to oppose me now? Where are my enemies? Let them appear! 9See, the Sovereign Lord is on my side!** The fulfillment of prophecy is to be lived out in Jesus.

 Friends, the Lord bore the burden of our sins so that you and I can live in harmony and love. Without a doubt, he went to the cross so we can live an abundant life as forgiven and redeemed people. He went there willingly to die for you and me.

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ, he entered Jerusalem in much the way he has entered our lives. We must never forget he invited us into a relationship of forgiveness, love and peace. In faithfulness to this invitation, we too have a charge to invite others to enter into a relationship with the Savior. That means we have to be open to share our faith.

Indeed, the Lord went through severe pain and suffering for us and our lives are all the better. There is enough suffering in the world and within the body of Christ to go around. This body of Christ has also suffered somethings in it past and is on the mend and will continue to do so until true reconciliation and healing occurs. Oh yes, we can say that we really are okay. Yet I know that I along with many others know the depth of hurt and misunderstanding that exists and still remains. Reconciliation is through Christ.

You and I need to remember that the Savior suffered and died for us. We are not to cause suffering to others with our words or with our actions. Otherwise, we become no better than those who crucified Jesus and also pounded those nails into his hands.

So Jesus enters our lives to save us, Hosanna, and to give our faith and salvation purpose. We must never forget that the better our relationship with Christ becomes, the better you and I become more Christ-like in everything we do and say. True discipleship and love comes through sincere and faithful hearts, minds and souls for the Lord. Yes, we have been reconciled with God through Christ Jesus. He went to that cross, he took on the pains of the world, and he gave us life.

I have shared with you before about the isle of Iona and the Christian abbey on the island. I consider this place one of my thin places where I can really get into my spiritual nature with God and come face to face with God. The Iona community is beginning Holy Week and on their website they had the following words to enter the week.

Holy Week 2018: The journey begins....

He will walk

a little in front of us

towards Jerusalem.

He will not be scared

though we are apprehensive.

If we try to discourage him,

he will recognise the devil in our voice,

and he will tell us as much

in no uncertain terms.

Then he will go on again,

in faith,

towards Jerusalem.

He will walk

a little in front of us

into controversy.

He will not be scared,

though we are apprehensive.

He will argue with the intelligent,

stop in their tracks the self-assured,

touch the scabby,

upset bank balances

by his outlandish behaviour in the sanctuary,

and weep in public.

Then he will go on again,

in faith,

towards Jerusalem.....

From ‘Stages on the Way’ ©WGRGwww.wildgoose.scot

Indeed, Jesus endured extreme pain for us on that cross. So on this Palm Sunday, may we remember how the savior came humbly into the city to offer hosanna. May we too be humble in spirit as we walk with him to the cross. When the people welcomed Jesus into the city, they lifted up their voices of hosanna. We too welcome him into our lives and our worship.

 **Hosanna!**

 **Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!**

 **Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!**

 **Hosanna in the highest heaven!** [Mark 11:9b-10]

Hosanna! Praise be to God!

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Supporting Scriptures:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

**1**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
    his love endures forever.

**2**Let Israel say:
    “His love endures forever.”

**19**Open for me the gates of the righteous;
    I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.
**20**This is the gate of the Lord
    through which the righteous may enter.
**21**I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
    you have become my salvation.

**22**The stone the builders rejected
    has become the cornerstone;
**23**the Lord has done this,
    and it is marvelous in our eyes.
**24**The Lord has done it this very day;
    let us rejoice today and be glad.

**25**Lord, save us!
    Lord, grant us success!

**26**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
    From the house of the Lord we bless you.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118%253A1-2%252CPsalm+118%253A19-29&version=NIV#fen-NIV-15896a)]
**27**The Lord is God,
    and he has made his light shine on us.
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
    up[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118%253A1-2%252CPsalm+118%253A19-29&version=NIV#fen-NIV-15897b)] to the horns of the altar.

**28**You are my God, and I will praise you;
    you are my God, and I will exalt you.

**29**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
    his love endures forever.

**John 12:12-16 (NRSV)**

12The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 13So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, (Psalm 118:26)

 “Hosanna!

 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—

 the King of Israel!”

14Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: (Zechariah 9:9)

15“Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion.

 Look, your king is coming,

 sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

16His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.