

+WEEKLY SERMON

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Palm Sunday

'Ride on ride on in majesty! Hark, all the tribes 'Hosannah' cry.'

This coming Sunday is known as Palm Sunday and these words will be sung in many churches across the country as Christians celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

The crowds gathered to welcome their messiah, they were excited, shouting and waving palm branches, jostling for the best position to see this celebrity of the day. Too often we have a sanitised view of how this day would have been ... people meekly standing and gently waving palm branches.

I think it would have been much more like the crowds who welcome a pop star or celebrity. For those of you who are cycling fans, perhaps like the crowds who line the side of the routes, especially the narrow mountain roads, when the leader forces the crowds to part, and they ride through a wall of sound and waving flags.

That is how I think the ride into Jerusalem would have been for Jesus.

Palm Sunday is also a reminder of the hopes and expectations the people had for a Messiah, a king who would bring peace and justice.

He didn't come as they might have expected, not on a powerful horse, but riding on a donkey, not as a warrior king, but as a gentle messiah, with a mandate for change in people's lives and attitudes by encouragement in following his ways.

It must have been confusing for those watching, yet for Jesus, it was a powerful message he was giving. It was an illustrated sermon they would never forget. Greatness does not come from the image you present to the world. The people knew who Jesus was on the inside.

They had experienced His love, mercy, and great compassion. They had seen his miracles. Outward trappings didn't matter. Jesus might have been riding on a humble donkey, but that didn't define him or diminish his power or authority.

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week when Christians remember the events from Jesus' final ride into Jerusalem to his arrest and crucifixion and prepare for the great celebrations of Easter Day.

During this coming week you may like to pray ...

'Merciful God, walk with us as we journey through Holy Week. From the joyful events of Palm Sunday to the sorrow of the crucifixion and the triumph of Easter, remind us of your enduring love for us. Amen.'

Rev Carole Garner, Parish of Oswaldtwistle

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