

## WELCOME 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – PALM SUNDAY '24 B

John 12:1-19

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

*Lord Jesus Christ, to shouts & songs you entered a city that would reject you & where you were to die for all people. Enter our hearts, we pray, and subdue them to your will. Crucify our sinful selves & raise us in your likeness. As your disciples praised your coming and spread garments in your way, make us ready to lay at your feet all that we have and are, that we too may praise your arrival by your spirit among us. In your name we pray Lord Jesus... Amen!*

**WELCOME!** It's great to be together again today! **Bible Study Qs** & **Growing Praise** insert are there so God can lead you deeper into His word/work in your life, & you can share that w/ someone else. We also use them for our **Zoom** Bible Study Catch-ups on Friday @ 1p.m.

**As we move into this week...** **Royalty** from those who wear real crowns to pop icons, sporting heroes, & media luminaries our world is fascinated by royalty. We dress like they do, buy their brands, imitate their styles & hang on their every word...until their star fades or they fall from the top to be replaced by the next...king, queen, prince, princess...icon or luminary.

Sadly, the most you might ever get from one of them is an autograph, a cute selfie, or some trinket souvenir or memorabilia reminding you of **THEIR** greatness.

But there is a **King**...the True King whose sole purpose in life was to abandon his greatness so you could share in it...to give up his glory & grandeur so those could be yours...to sacrifice his life so you could live fully & freely as beloved child of the Father & co-heir of all God's blessings.

**His** disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfilment of prophecy.

*But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him.*

The truth is King Jesus came to pour out His life extravagantly for you! For Jesus there was no confusion...no uncertainty. He chose to wear one crown, to take one road, to walk one path that would forever change the trajectory of human life...and forever reclaim you in the Father's love.

*We'll experience & share that today...  
but first...Let's sing again...What Love My God  
then hear God's Word...*

### FAITH CHAT:

Hosanna means "God save us!" "God saves us!"

Hosanna is both a plea for help & a statement of confidence...So...

1. If you were going to praise & thank God for one thing today...What would it be?
2. If you were going to ask God for one thing today...What would it be?
3. How does that "one thing" effect your daily life?

## **PALM SUNDAY '24 B – THE TRUTH: JESUS IS KING**

John begins telling the story of Jesus this way, “*The Word became flesh & made his dwelling among us.*” – Jn 1:14 When God chooses to fully reveal himself – completely show us what he is like - God chooses the medium of human flesh, blood & bones – hair, skin & nails...stuff that sweats, stinks, gets hungry, tired, dirty & then dies. In complete contrast to the Jewish understanding that to stand in God’s presence to see God was to die...Jesus tells us it is God who desires nearness to us...that from the beginning God’s intention is to live & walk...literally “dwell” w/ us. Jesus makes it plain that **life**...life as it is **MEANT TO BE** is only available in his presence...in him...in free & full relationship w/ the Father through life in Jesus Christ...anything else...is not life

We’ve been together @ 20 yrs & most of you probably know Heb 2:14-15 are among my favourite/go-to Bible **vss**...*Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh & blood—the Son also became flesh & blood. For only as a human being could he die, & only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.* Jesus reminds us it is God who desires nearness to us... from the beginning God’s intention is to live & walk...“dwell” w/ us...life as it is meant to be - in free & full relationship w/ the Father beyond the grip of death is only available through life in Jesus Christ. Which leads us to this...

*Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus’ honour. Martha served, & Lazarus was among those who ate with him.* As John recounts the good news of Jesus, this part of the narrative immediately follows Jesus raising Laz from death...resuscitating him & restoring him to his sisters. As Jesus approaches Laz’s tomb Martha (older sister?) confesses to Jesus, “*I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.*” – Jn 11:27 She declares w/o hesitation that he is the King...the Messiah ...the Lord that has been promised by God to his people...She’s seen enough, heard enough, experienced enough to know...and his mastery over the grave, forces of nature, spiritual powers of this world, the history & faith of Israel more than convinced her...& in the middle of this dinner in Jesus’ honour...

**Mary** took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, & anointed Jesus’ feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.

Mary never speaks Martha’s confession. She demonstrates it by her actions. Mary never says what Martha says...but she too looks at Jesus & sees the hopes of every generation...the longings of every heart...the desire & yearning of all creation being met in full in Jesus. She knows Jesus sees her, her sister/brother, each disciple

around the room, every child he’s ever blessed, leper he’s ever cleansed, every blind, sick, lame person he’s ever healed...as being of infinite worth...objects of his unquenchable love. She knows he has chosen to choose as friends & companions the misfits, riffraff & dregs of polite society because they too are of infinite value... She knows even those who turn away or attack him ferociously are also loved... even in their rebellion...lost sons/daughters the Father deeply wants to restore.

Knowing she is worth everything **TO** him, she offers everything she has **FOR** him. A years’ wage...\$75-80KAUD...She has just told the world her future her security her stability her hopes/dreams reside only in Jesus. She knows her future is yoked to him. Mary’s gift exceeds extravagance. Mary also exceeds good taste w/ her hair her hands/hair on this unmarried man. She is quite public w/ her expression of deep love that none could ignore. It is no wonder there’s a reaction to Mary’s untamed love. For what she has received she holds nothing back in return & true gratitude & loving devotion are often slandered as deviance.

Not to pick on Judas...John tells us all we need to know...but I think you know someone just like him (not thief/betrayer) but someone who perhaps has asked, “Why would you waste a perfectly good Sunday morning in church?” Why would you make your kids go someplace they don’t want to go...got nothing for ‘em? Why give away your hard earned \$\$ for no return? Why would I say “no” to something I (my kids) really want to do & hurts no one & is fun? You know...you know Judas...

*Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”* In defending Mary...Jesus points to the deeper significance of her visible confession of faith, devotion, trust & love...Mary does not just anoint Jesus as Lord, King & Messiah. She anoints a dead man walking. If the beautiful aroma of deep love/deeper devotion & the ugly crucifixion to come seem a strange blend at this table, then we are onto the good news as John tells it: Jesus is lifted up in suffering so he might draw all to himself. Jesus is lifted up in weakness/brokenness so that his glory would shine from his dying & everything broken/weak in us could be made whole/strong. Jesus is lifted up to die in scorn so that his reign of life w/o end would begin from the cross. Before this chapter ends John records Jesus saying: *The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.”* He said this to indicate how he was going to die. – Jn 12:31-32 Jesus makes clear that his triumph begins in what the world swears is defeat of the worst kind. Which is why of course...

**His** disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfilment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened & realized these things had been written about him. They understood neither Mary's devotion nor the thronging masses singing songs & celebrating Jesus' entry to Jerusalem. They too seem to cling to the idea that Jesus is going to deliver the goods right now. Few yrs ago Pr Bill Hybels wrote this...I come back to it now & **again**... "Everyone who lined the streets had a different reason for waving those palms. Some were political activists; they'd heard Jesus had supernatural power, & they wanted him to use it to free Israel from Roman rule. Others had loved ones who were sick or dying. They waved branches, hoping for physical healing. Some were onlookers merely looking for something to do, while others were genuine followers who wished Jesus would establish himself as an earthly king. Jesus was the only one in the parade who knew why he was going to Jerusalem - to die. He had a mission, while everyone else had an agenda."

That always hits me because...look closely at Jesus here...Jesus doesn't demand an audience w/ the Roman governor or set up a political action committee to advocate for equitable police behaviour, fairer taxes & more life-preserving laws. He didn't give any speeches or rally an army. By Friday he'll tell the governor his kingdom is not of this world; once & for all rejecting gov't as a solution & politics as his primary arena for his work.

No other king suffers/dies for his people...Jesus does. It is what he came to do. "...he gave up his divine privileges; (he made himself nothing) he took the humble position of a slave & was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God & died a criminal's death on a cross." - **Php 2:7-8** The only God we know is the One we see in Jesus. The only blood on his hands is his own. The dirt/grime/stench of life/death are all over him. No other king suffers & dies for his people...Jesus does. Jesus takes on the role of sin offering & sacrifices his own life for the sin of the whole world. Jesus, the honoured guest of the parade, is put to death & his followers betray him, deny him, & desert him. Instead of seizing the power & glory the mob wanted for him...instead of grasping the accolades as a tidal wave into the place of honour...instead of clinging to his divine privileges...Jesus offers himself to the saving plan & redeeming purpose of God. Jesus surrenders himself to the saving will & redeeming desire of God the Father. No other king suffers/dies for his people...Jesus does.

- Because of his trust in God's ultimate plan to win back a sinful humanity Jesus lays down every divine power & every divine privilege & commits himself fully to enduring death for you & for me. This King wears the grime of our sin & forgives.

- Because of his trust in God's purpose to destroy death forever Jesus lays down immortality & eternity so we might have life in his name. This King takes on the dust of death & gives life.
- Because of his trust in God's intent to defeat evil once & for all Jesus lays down honour & glory to the forces of evil so we may be free from evil's grasp. This King succumbs to evil so that evil will be overthrown.

Jesus doesn't leave the story there... His kingship is not one that ends in dust, death, sin & evil. His royal rule doesn't end as a footnote in history...w/ trinkets, souvenirs, & selfies. His reign over all things is w/o end. Jesus promises more than dust/ashes/decay...just as he told Mary/Martha: **I** am the resurrection & the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, & everyone who lives & believes in me will never die."

No other king suffers/dies to defeat death for his people...Jesus does. There is a **King**...the True King whose sole purpose in life was to abandon his greatness so you could share in it...to give up his glory & grandeur so those could be yours...to sacrifice his life so you could live fully & freely as beloved child of the Father & co-heir of all God's blessings.

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As you leave today, be specific & share w/ your neighbour...

**TAKE IT HOME** - What in your life does Jesus need to become King over so that the truth of his Kingship is more visible in you?

Let's pray... *Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself & became our servant. In obedience to the Father you died on the cross for our salvation. Transform our lives so we follow you in the way of the cross, proclaim you as Lord & King, & share the joy of a life lived in obedience to you to the glory of God the Father. Jesus we pray in your Name. Amen.*