

Palm Sunday

I should explain that a crowd is a gathering of many people all together in close proximity, some of you will remember crowds!!!!

Palm Sunday! It was a day when as Jesus came to the festival in a packed out Jerusalem, crowds of people rushed out to see this spectacle, they joined in the shouting, they tore palm branches off the trees and threw them at the feet of the donkey carrying Jesus, some pulled their cloaks off and threw them, they were well into it, I don't think there were too many casual observers. And they shouted together 'Hosanna' 'Save us now' Could it be that they knew what He knew? - John 12:16 *At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realise that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.*

No! It seems there was little understanding on that days to what was really going on.

I wonder what is our grasp of things? What do we understand of what was going on?

Steve Martin, an Elder at Eden church was meant to be our preacher for today. Steve shared about the way you can follow the events from this Sunday all the way through to next Sunday and the faithfulness of Jesus going to the cross because he loves us.

God Loves us, despite our unfaithfulness!

Are you aware of His Love as we start out on this Holy Week?
And how faithful do you feel you are?

You are not going to be able to along with the crowd this week. It's going to be you and your household, maybe just you on your own.

We have the opportunity this 'Holy Week' to follow Jesus in these last days of his life. To see the reaction of the crowds change dramatically and to witness how his disciples were caught out by their lack of understanding as to what was going on.

And we need to ask ourselves What is going on here? What is our understanding?

Pat Davies shared her experience as a little girl on what is called in Welsh Sul y Blodau, Flowering Sunday, the Palm Sunday Welsh tradition of putting flowers on graves.

The reality of what exactly was going on that first Palm Sunday was in fact staggering. These were events that were going change everything in terms of God's relationship with humankind.

A new relationship was going to be made possible. It had been promised and pointed to throughout the OT and now things were coming to a head.

As well as being Pastor of Stanwell Road Baptist Church I am also the Chaplain of the Summit Centre in South Wales, an outdoor education and climbing centre which is part of Rock UK. I caught up with the Centre Director Rachel Allen this week.

Rachel shared of the amazing reality of Jesus knowing as He came into Jerusalem, that he was coming against all the forces of evil. He knew what was ahead and faced it for us.

Please do pray for Rachel, for the Summit Centre, for the 40 staff there and all the staff at the 4 Rock UK centres at this time when they are uncertain about the future. And we remember that this is the situation for so many at this time.

Jesus knows what we are all going through. He knows what is ahead of us even if we don't. He will be right there with us through it all. Contrast that with the fact that on Palm Sunday He knew what was ahead of Him, the Crowds and even his closest disciples were not going to be right there with Him.

The crowds were going to turn on Him and His disciples were going to desert Him!

On Palm Sunday everyone was enthusiastic - 'Long live the King' - that's what it amounted to. The crowds were looking for a political leader and political freedom.

Their motivation - They wanted a miracle worker, not a saviour of their souls.

It never ceases to amaze me, He gets this sort of welcome today, He asks people to follow Him, to trust Him. He gets the same sort of welcome that is fickle and superficial. Welcoming Jesus is just a game to be played. When the crowds on Palm Sunday welcomed Him, they were just emotionally aroused, moved by the sudden impulse of the moment. - No depth of conviction or force of character.

Weren't they a terrible lot? I don't want to be unkind, but we need to put our finger on what is a human trait. It's a problem of superficiality. There are special occasion people who will shout with the rest, but by their lives deny that God has control, that He is their King. Many are moved by the feast, the sudden impulse, but when convictions are challenged to follow Him all the way, they slink away with the crowds. CRUCIFY - He's disturbing me, upsetting me, I want Jesus to go away. I'm uncomfortable, I want my own way and do my own thing.

But I'm talking about 'them' aren't I, whoever they are.

Are we shouting Hosanna? 'Save us now'? Will we end up saying Crucify?, we don't want you Jesus.

He comes to us in the same way He has always come, to give Peace by pardon, to give riches and glorious purposes for life and eternity. But He doesn't send out an advertising team, a campaign. He comes in ways that seem offensive to us, offensive to our mistaken expectations.

As we arrive at Jerusalem with Jesus, the question presses upon us. Are we going along for the trip in the hope that Jesus will fulfil some of our hopes and desires?

Are we ready to sing a psalm of praise, but only as long as Jesus seems to be doing what we want?

The long dusty pilgrim way of our lives gives most of us plenty of time to sort out our motives for following Jesus in the first place.

Are we ready not only to spread our cloaks on the road in front of him but also now to follow him into trouble, controversy, trial and death?

Jesus demonstrates His unending love for You as He makes His way to Jerusalem and to the Cross. My prayer is that as this Holy Week and the weeks ahead of us unfold we will respond to that Love.

Hosanna! - Save us Now!

Lord bring an end to this Pandemic, bring comfort to those who struggle in it and are frightened by it. Bring strength to those offering help and healing. Bring us to a place of faithfulness and trust in you, our Lord and King.