

Order of Worship for At Home Worship

April 5, 2020

(Read the prayers and scripture readings and recite the Creed aloud, even if you are by yourself, in order to hear with the ears each one)

Prepare for worship- Sit in silence or with soft music for a few moments

Opening Prayer:

Blessed One, we are humbled by your example. You entered Jerusalem in a lowly estate, riding on a donkey. You emptied yourself and came as a servant to all, forsaking the power to command. Son of David, come to us now and be our king, that we too may sing our hosannas! Amen

Hymn- *Sweet, Sweet Spirit*

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place,
and I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord;
there are sweet expressions on each face,
and I know they feel the presence of the Lord.

Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove,
stay right here with us, filling us with your love;
and for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise;
without a doubt we know that we have been revived
when we shall leave this place.

Affirmation of Faith Apostle's Creed

Prayer:

Almighty God, you sent your son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to suffer death on the cross. Grant that we may share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God who hears our prayers (Pray in silence for your concerns) and taught us to pray.

The Lord's Prayer

Prayer of Illumination:

Open our ears that we may hear, and our hearts and minds
that we may receive your word, O Lord our rock and redeemer.

(After each reading take two to three minutes to reflect upon the meaning of the passage to you today.)

Old Testament Reading- Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 118

New Testament Reading Philippians 2:5-11

Special Music Dan Greshel (Online Service. At Home you may sing a hymn or play a song that fits with Palm/ Passion Sunday.)

Gospel Reading Matthew 21:1-11

Sermon Not Your Usual King

Song *God Be With You till We Meet Again*

God be with you till we meet again;
by his counsels guide, uphold you,
with his sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Benediction:

We have shouted hosanna in praise to King Jesus.
Let us go forth to live according to the rule of this King. Amen

Palm Sunday

4/5/2020

Not Your Usual King

Matthew 21:1-11

As Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling the words of the prophet Zechariah, the crowds shout Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! It is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth, in Galilee! Finally coming to Jerusalem!

The crowd shouts Hosanna, which is derived from the Hebrew word which means to save. It is the word used in Psalm 118: 25 - Save us, we beseech you, O Lord. But by the time of Jesus, hosanna had become just a word used in cheer and praise much like we say hooray today. But even though they may not have realized it, they were crying out for what was needed. They needed to be saved. They needed a savior and they correctly identified Jesus as the savior.

They correctly identified Jesus as the Son of David. Matthew begins his gospel with a genealogy that places Jesus solidly in the line of David. Jesus was a descendant of the greatest of all the Israelite kings, the one that united all twelve tribes and established Israel as a kingdom. David established the monarchy and this son of David would restore the Davidic monarchy.

They also correctly identified that Jesus was the one that came in the name of the Lord. Jesus was sent from God to save them. Jesus was the son of David sent from God to restore the kingdom of Israel, to save Israel from the oppressors.

They identified Jesus as a prophet, one that proclaimed God's word and how God was going to act to save them.

They identified Jesus as a king, and they gave him the royal treatment. They placed their cloaks on the road. They cut branches from the trees and laid them on the road. These were signs that they were submitting to the rule of this king who was entering the city. This was not a new thing. We see similar actions when Solomon was anointed King in 1 Kings 1, when Jehu was anointed by Elisha in 2 Kings 9, when Simon Maccabeus regained control of Jerusalem in 1 Maccabees 13, removing foreign powers from the city, and when Judas Maccabeus purified

and restored the temple in 2 Maccabees 10. The crowd hailed Jesus as the king and rightful ruler of them.

The crowd was saying all the right things. But they did not get it. Later in the week they would be shouting to crucify him, this man they thought would save them and be their king.

But this was not the usual king. Several years ago, Oldsmobile ran an ad campaign with the tag line, "this is not your father's Oldsmobile." In an attempt to attract younger buyers, they were saying that Oldsmobiles were not the big, boxy, solid family car that your father drove. Oldsmobiles were now sleek and sporty, nothing like those tanks that your father drove. These Oldsmobiles were nothing like the Oldsmobiles of the past.

Jesus was not like the kings of the past. Jesus does not come into the city riding a mule, which was favored by the early Israelite kings, or a great war horse or a chariot as favored by the Romans but on a donkey, a common everyday work animal. This would be the equivalent of the President coming into Columbia riding on an old tractor rather than a Cadillac Limo.

Jesus was not followed by a great conquering army or surrounded by dignitaries, but with this small group of disciples that included fishermen, tax collectors, laborers, political zealots, and even women.

But it was beyond even these outer trappings where Jesus was different from other kings, differences that the crowd did not see, and in the end did not accept.

The crowd cried for Jesus to save, to save them, to save them from what? They wanted to be saved from the oppression of the Romans and Herod. They wanted to be saved from the burden of outrageous taxes and levies. They want to be saved from the fear of never knowing when one of their children might be taken to be sold into slavery in payment for said taxes.

They wanted to be saved for themselves. They wanted Israel to be saved, to be restored to the former glory that they experienced under David. They wanted a king that would save the nation and bring back the political, economic and military status it had enjoyed in the past. Restore the kingdom of Israel.

These were the things a usual king would do. But Jesus was not a usual king. Jesus did not come to restore the kingdom of Israel but to bring about the kingdom of God. Jesus came to bring about the rule of God to all people, all nations. A rule that is based not on attaining wealth and power, but caring for the sick, the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the least among us. Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God, whose strength is not based upon how well the haves are doing but how well the have nots are doing.

Jesus came to end oppression, not by destroying the oppressors but by bringing the oppressors into the Kingdom of God. Rather than destroying the oppressive powers of Rome and Herod, Jesus sought to transform Rome and Herod so that they lived and ruled according to the rule of God.

Jesus came to save not only from the political oppression, but from the oppressive power of sin and evil in the lives of the people and the world.

No, Jesus was not your father's King. Jesus was not your usual king. Jesus came to bring about a different rule based upon the rule of God's love, not human rules and laws. Jesus came not to overthrow the oppressor but to overturn the oppressor. To transform the oppressive rulers so that they would turn from ruling based on power to ruling according to God's rule of love.

The crowd correctly identified Jesus as a prophet, bringing God's word, as the son of David a King, as the one that would save, as the one that would bring a new rule. They said all the right things.

But they did not get it right.

And in the end, they rejected Jesus. They rejected this new king, for he was not the usual king ushering in a usual kingdom. He was not their father's king bringing about their father's kingdom. He was the son of God bringing about THE FATHER'S kingdom.

Before we so quickly and easily dismiss the crowd for their foolishness and stupidity, I think we must reflect upon ourselves and our lives. Do we say and do all the right things- we go to church, we recite the prayers and the creeds, we give out tithes, we give to charitable causes, we pray and read our Bible daily, we even can quote the Bible- but still live according to our usual rule?

One of the meditations I read recently in my daily devotional stuck home this point. It was a paragraph from Robert Foster's book *Money, Sex and Power* in which he asked if we buy a house or a car because we have the money to buy a house or a car, or because God is telling us to buy the house or car? If it is the former, because we have the money, then we are ruled by money. But if we buy the house or car because God tells us we need the house or car for God's purpose, then we are ruled by God.

By the former we reject Jesus as our king even as the crowds did. By the latter we accept this new King, this unusual king who brings into our lives an unusual rule, God's divine rule. We live in God's kingdom, an eternal kingdom that is both here in our lives today, and beyond death. We are transformed from the Palm Sunday crowd, saying and doing the right thing, to being Easter people, living in the presence and guidance of God our father, through Christ our Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit.