

## Worship Guide – Palm Sunday – April 5, 2020

Peace verse – As [Jesus] approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes.” -Luke 19:41-42 (NIV)

Light a candle in your worship space to represent the peace of Christ in your midst today.

Call to Praise – Psalm 118:19-29

Open to me the gates of holiness; I will enter and give thanks.

***This is the Lord’s own gate where the just may enter.***

I will thank you, for you have answered and you are my savior.

***The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.***

This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes.

***This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad!***

O Lord, grant us salvation; O Lord, grant success!

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

We bless you from the house of the Lord;

the Lord God is our light.

***Go forward in procession with branches even to the altar.***

You are my God, I thank you. My God, I praise you!

***Give thanks to the Lord who is good; for God’s love endures forever.***

Song (to sing or read): All glory, laud, and honor – Hymnal Worship Book #237

Chorus: All glory, laud, and honor to thee, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.

Thou art the King of Israel and David’s royal Son,  
who in the Lord’s name cometh, the King and blessed one. (chorus)

The people of the Hebrews with palms before thee went;  
our praise and prayer and anthems before thee we present. (chorus)

To thee before thy passion, they sang their hymns of praise;  
to thee, now high exalted, our melody we raise. (chorus)

Thou didst accept their praises, accept the prayers we bring,  
who in all good delightest, thou good and gracious King. (chorus)

Offering: Consider what you will offer to God this week. It could be a phone call or card, a financial gift, activity supplies for Green Hills, a gift of time or food, etc ...

Offering prayer:

*Jesus, You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it.*

*Everything is yours. Do with it what you will.*

*Give me only your love and your grace.*

*That is enough for me. Amen.*

Affirmation of faith – I Peter 2:21-24

(translation prepared by Mary H. Schertz)

For to this you have been called:  
 because Christ also suffered for you.  
 He left an example for you, that you should follow in his steps.  
 He committed no sin; no trickery was found on his lips.  
 When he was insulted, he did not insult in return.  
 When he was threatened, he did not threaten.  
 Instead, he trusted himself to the one who judges justly.  
 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree  
 so that we might die to sin and live for justice.  
 By his wounds you have been healed.

Scripture: John 12: 12-19

You may want to skim read from John 11:45 (where our reading ended last week) to 12:12 where this week begins. Notice how Jesus' raising of Lazarus has ongoing consequences, and the responses of different groups to that miracle.

Questions for Scripture reflection:

1. What word, phrase, or feeling caught your attention when you read the passage?
2. The crowd that met Jesus on the road shouted "Hosanna! [Save us!] Blessed is ... the King of Israel!" The people wanted and expected Jesus to become their king – their kind of king. Some were looking for a miracle-worker, others wanted a king to lead a national revolution. No one expected Jesus to willingly go to the cross. What kind of "king" (leader) are you looking for? Try to honestly name what expectations you have of Jesus.
3. John 12:15 is adapted from Zechariah 9:9 (check out v.9-10). In the Old Testament context, the verse described a coming ruler who would restore God's people. Although he is "triumphant and victorious", he is also "humble and riding on a donkey". What does that tell us about God's character? What does Jesus' behavior in today's passage, and the way early Christians understood it, tell us about God's character?
4. In John 12:15b-16 we hear the author's voice interjecting a reflective comment into the story. John indicates that it took some time for the early Christian community to make sense of all they had witnessed. It wasn't until after "Jesus was glorified" (i.e. crucified and risen) that followers of Jesus connected his action of riding the donkey to the prophetic text in Zechariah. Think of a time when the passing of time and/or the voice of the Holy Spirit enabled you to see or understand how God was working.
5. Read John 12:19, then also John 12:20-21; 11:47-48; 11:57; and 7:35. What irony(s) do you notice? Are there ways that Jesus' adversaries speak truth without realizing it? (It's not clear who "some Greeks" (in 12:20) actually refers to, but the Pharisees would likely consider them part of "the world" that is pursuing Jesus.)
6. Each of the four gospels describe the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus in somewhat different ways. In regards to the role of "the crowd", compare: Matthew 27:24, Mark 15:6-15, Luke 23:13, 18-21, John 19:6, 14-16. We often talk about how the crowd that cheered Jesus as a hero on one day, only a few days later cried out for his crucifixion. I have wondered if the two crowds (the one waving branches and the one yelling 'crucify') were made up of the same people.

- a. What do you think? What clues do the passages give? (And what do you do with the fact that the gospels are different and/or unclear?)
- b. I would like to think that I would not have gone from the first crowd to being in the second. But the reality is I know there are times when I have joined the wrong crowd, or not resisted the crowd, or just been silent or hiding. Have there been times when you succumbed to the pressure of the crowd? Use the following prayer of confession, and any amount of silent prayer time you need, to talk with God about this.

Prayer of Confession (by Pastor Joanna Harader, from SpaciousFaith.com, adapted by RK)

Jesus, you keep surprising us.

Today you are tottering down the streets of Jerusalem on a donkey!

**You are not the savior we expect.**

Your power doesn't look like the power we want our God to demonstrate.

**Your wisdom makes no sense to us.**

We are happy to join the crowd, waving branches,

**But not so sure we want to follow you**

into the upper room

**into the Garden of Gethsemane**

into the trial rooms of the Sanhedrin and Pilate

**to the foot of the cross.**

Forgive our false assumptions.

**Clarify our clouded vision.**

Let us relax into the foolishness of your love, your grace.

**Hosanna, hosanna.**

***Save us, we beseech you!***

Song: (to sing or read): Don't be afraid – Sing the Journey #105 (by John Bell)

Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,

my love is stronger than your fear.

Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,

and I have promised, promised to be always near.

Intercessory prayer:

Do not hide your face from us, O God; you have been our help.

Trustworthy God, we bring our prayers to you

because we rely on you to protect and provide.

***In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer.***

*(offer your prayers for yourself and loved ones; for our community and neighbors;  
for the church; for the world. Close with the Lord's Prayer.)*

Song: Hope Lingers Here (sung by Vancouver Youth Choir Voices)

Chorus: I will not hate, and I will not fear. In our darkest hour, hope lingers here.

(rest of lyrics in the Comments section, posted by Janeen Bertsche Johnson)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0bmhcvPwTI&list=PLNaA97o6cqqrZqnRhPO3GzZe8L450ylbr&index=18&t=0s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0bmhcvPwTI&list=PLNaA97o6cqqrZqnRhPO3GzZe8L450ylbr&index=18&t=0s)

Alternate song: My Jesus, I love thee – Hymnal Worship Book #522

My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine.

For thee all the follies of sin I resign.

My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art thou.

If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I love thee because thou hast first loved me,  
and purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree.

I love thee for wearing the thorns on thy brow.

If ever I loved thee, my Jesus 'tis now.

Closing benediction

May the Lord direct our hearts to the love of God  
and to the steadfastness of Christ. Amen