**What does a good King do?**

Most of us know the story of Palm Sunday, but in case you don’t, this is the outline of it:

Jesus has spent 3 years proving that He is who He said He is. He’s done a huge amount of what He was sent by God the Father to do:

He has shown that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. People that can’t see have had their eyes opened to the love of God (literally and metaphorically). Demons have been cast out, dead people have been raised, the love of God has been shown to people in the way Jesus is, the way that his message turns the world upside down. Blessed are the poor in Spirit, indeed. The message Jesus had shared - repent for the kingdom of heaven is close - or turn towards God, the kingdom of heaven is close, it’s time to change how we are and trust God more than we trust ourselves or each other, it’s time to stop being selfish, to stop sinning, to stop doing our own thing - that message of love and radical welcome into the divine dance of life with God - it had gone well with the poorer folks and the folks who were trying to find their way in life. It had gone less well with those who had power and authority.

And now what’s he doing? He’s entering Jerusalem on a donkey - see oh Israel, your king comes riding on a colt - that message had power. The people knew what they were looking for, what they were waiting for. A powerful saviour who would turn things around and get things back to normal. Their lives had been turned upside down by the virus of Roman occupation and here comes the king, ready to turn it all around. Everything will be ok. Hosanna to the Son of David.

And there’s Jesus too. He knows His Scriptures. He knows the significance of riding in to Jerusalem on a colt too. He knows what it looks like, how it will be seen, how it will be interpreted. He is the King, the Saviour, the one come to free the people from tyranny, but it is not the tyranny they expect to be freed from that Jesus has come to deal with once and for all. Jesus was very good at making statements with how he did what he did as well as what he said. If you knew what you were looking for it was no surprise that He would turn out to be the Messiah in the end.

So there’s a crowd waiting for a miracle, and there’s Jesus who is the epitome of love, a living miracle, who knows that in order to do what He needs to do in a few short days, He’s going to be very much misunderstood. And yet He does what He does anyway. What a King. A good King does the right thing, always.

I’ve met a lot of people who don’t believe in God. There might even be people who with this service today who don’t believe in God. Maybe you don’t believe because you’re like the people who welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as king and then later the same week, confused about what He was about if it wasn’t to overthrow tyranny, decided that He wasn’t for you. There are loads of reasons why people give up on God, or the idea of God. We feel let down, the Church turns out to be an annoying bunch of hypocritical God-botherers, the music is terrible, we prayed for a thing we thought was massively important - as it almost certainly was - and the outcome didn’t go the way that we wanted and needed it to. If God wants our love, our worship, the very least He should give us in return is what we want and if He doesn’t, then we don’t want anything to do with Him.

Understandable point of view, certainly. Immediately after this story, Jesus goes into the temple and, infuriated, turns out all those who have made it impossible for ‘My Father’s house’ as he calls it to be a house of prayer.

So many of our Churches have stopped being houses of prayer, and I think people see that and they see us for the hypocrites that we can be. Churches, made up of people and contained often in buildings need to be houses of prayer. The point I’m trying to get to this morning is this:

1. When you decide, day by day, whether to follow Jesus and the ways of His Father or not, remember that Jesus did all He did so that people could be free and have hope. It takes a trusting heart, mind and spirit to know that we are free in days like these but I believe that a wave of freedom and hope is coming for those who will put their trust in God and God alone.
2. Second, trusting God, pray. Pray like you’ve never prayed before. The Church is made up of people. If each Christian, a person in which God has made his heart their home, made their bodies temples of the Holy Spirit and houses of prayer, that would be a start. If all of us joined together as a collective House of Prayer that would be a fantastic next step. We want lots of things, certainly. What does God want?

Jesus just before He is arrested later in Holy Week says this,

’26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Jesus wants the love that the Father has for Him to be ours! How amazing. And not just that, He wants personally to be in us. When we become Christians, it’s not like agreeing to become a Cobblers supporter and committing to go to all the games. It’s more than that. It’s agreeing to receive the love of God, which we don’t deserve but are offered freely if we turn to Him, and then agreeing that God Himself might live within us.

So when we sing Hosanna, Hosanna, welcome, welcome God, we are not just having a sing-song. We’re welcoming again the love of God into our hearts and lives. And why do we have the love of God? To be free, and then to share it. To give it away. If God blesses you, give the blessing on to someone else. Don’t keep it for yourself. Then many more can be singing ‘hosanna, hosanna, welcome, welcome’ along with us too.

So what does a good King do? He loves His people and gives His life for them that they might have everything that the King could possibly give them. I want a king like that, don’t you?

If you’ve never welcomed Jesus in to your live, then today’s the day.

Pray with me,

God Thank you that Jesus wants the love you have for Him to be in me. Thank you that He wants to be one with me. I’ve not lived a perfect life and I know I’ve fallen short, but please forgive me and give me the new life and new start you offer me. Come and be my King, today.

Amen