

Caught up in celebration

Mark 11.1-11

There was a party atmosphere as Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem – on the day we call Palm Sunday. The authorities and leaders in Jerusalem were not impressed. But there were acts of generosity from the crowd: valuable cloaks, and branches cut for the coming festival were given up in the excitement of celebrating Jesus.

Now read **Mark 11.1-11** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

The Jewish people have been waiting for a Messiah – someone to save them – for centuries. They have definite ideas of what he'll be like, and Jesus doesn't quite fit them. He says and does some fascinating things, but this procession into Jerusalem is all wrong. A king comes on a horse – a show of power and strength – not on a donkey. Yet the crowd that is with him are convinced and are in a celebratory mood. What convinces you that Jesus is the Messiah? What would you give up in celebration?



What is the most extravagant gift you have given or received? What do you have to offer as a gift?

WATCH



Watch the song Hosanna from the 2000 film of Jesus Christ Superstar:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=7x530xSkAdk

Compare this to Mark 11.1-11. What do you think of the interpretation of the story in the film? What strikes you as accurate? Is there anything that jars?

IMAGINE

Go for a wander down your local high street. As you walk, use your imagination to paint a picture of Jesus on a donkey, surrounded by his followers, and entering your town, village or city. What would the locals make of him? Pray for the people and businesses that you pass, that they may somehow know the majesty of Jesus in this season.



You will need: a sheet of green A4 paper; sticky tape; scissors.

- Roll up paper, starting at the shorter end. Roll it reasonably tight to create a short tube. Secure the tube with sticky tape at the bottom and about halfway up.
- Press non-taped end of the tube flat. Cut it along the centre until you reach the tape in the middle.
- Cut each of the strips you've created in half again. Separate all the strips to make 'branches'. On each strip (branch) write a word or phrase giving praise to Jesus.



Daily Invitation

The crowds laid their robes on the ground for Jesus and the donkey to walk on. This was a costly thing to do. Find some fabric and lay it inside your front door, as if you are one of that original crowd. Imagine laying your only coat there, knowing it would be trampled and spoiled. How does that make you feel? As you enter and exit your home this week and cross that fabric, think about how you can invite and welcome Jesus to be part of all that you are doing, both inside and outside your home.

LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

On Palm Sunday, the crowds shouted 'Hosanna!' as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. Hosanna means, 'Please save us!' Each day this week, find a way to recognise that the planet, as well as its people, need saving. For example, you might decide not to use the car, or avoid buying things in plastic packaging, or switch off lights when you leave the room. For each saving action that you do, create or draw a paving slab and make a path in your garden tray or garden page (that you've been progressing throughout Lent).

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Jesus and his disciples were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives. They were almost near enough to hear the noise of the pilgrim crowds in the city.

Jesus sent two of his disciples on ahead, and they went, his surprising words echoing in their minds. He had said, 'Go into the next village, and as soon as you enter it, you will find tied up a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. If anyone asks you what you are doing, just say, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately."' "

So they went off and found a colt in the street, tied up near a door. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said, and they allowed them to take it. Then the disciples brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks on it and he sat on the animal.

There was a crowd of people and many of them spread their cloaks out on the road in front of Jesus, while others laid down leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And these pilgrims sang their ancient song:

'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'



And in these words, they heard the cries of the prophets of old. Then Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple. He looked around at everything, and as it was late, he went to spend the night at Bethany with his twelve disciples.

Mark 11.1-11

Did you know?

- At the time of Jesus, a cloak would have had a much greater value than they have today, making this a bigger sacrifice than it sounds to us.
- 'Hosanna' is a Hebrew word usually used to mean 'Praise', but it actually means 'Save us, please!'

Mark 11.1-11 (NRSV)

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately."' They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it.

Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.