

## **Barre Congregational Church**

April 5, 2020: A Pastoral message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ **Palm Sunday** ~

### ***A Jubilant Crowd and a Humble Messiah!***

Scripture Reading: Matthew 21 v 1-11

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Grace and peace to you, dear members and friends of the Barre Congregational Church on this day, Palm Sunday! I hope all is well with you. I am writing to you again from my home, and I ask that we again join many Christians around the world today in prayer, asking for God's mercy and protection against the Coronavirus pandemic.

Please pray this prayer in silence...

*Oh Lord, on this Palm Sunday we worship Your Holy Name!*

*We thank You for Your love and Presence among us.*

*This morning we are reminded of the words of the Psalmist,*

*That You are our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble!*

*We come to You again, and offer to You our hearts and minds*

*and all that we are,*

*We ask that You give us faith and hope deep inside to know*

*that You are with us during this trying time.*

*Help us not to fear, but to believe and trust in Your power and protection and remind us of the*

*sacrifice Your Son went through for our salvation.*

*We pray for all our needs and ask for Your forgiveness of our sins.*

*Bless our congregation and all our friends and neighbors*

*Be present and bring comfort to those who are sick and lonely*

*Bless our loved ones and keep them safe*

*Bring release of this virus and give us Your peace and protection*

*We pray this in Jesus' Name,*

*Amen*

### **Scripture Reading: Matthew 21:1-11**

Please spend a moment and read through the scripture prayerfully...

- 1 *When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples,*
- 2 *saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me.*
- 3 *If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately."*
- 4 *This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,*
- 5 *"Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*
- 6 *The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them;*
- 7 *they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them.*
- 8 *A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.*
- 9 *The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"*
- 10 *When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?"*
- 11 *The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."*

### **Introduction**

We have been on this journey of Lent for a few weeks now, remembering the journey of Christ himself, as He spent time alone with God to find the strength to face the suffering that lay ahead. So, here we are, on Palm Sunday, the day when Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as the Son of David, the humble Prince of Peace. May this message from Matthew 21 v 1-11 inspire us as we approach this Holy Week.

### **Palm Sunday...A Powerful Statement of a Humble Messiah**

Palm Sunday has an important statement to make to the church and the world. It is a statement of humility from our Lord and Saviour, as He calls for a donkey to be brought for His ride into Jerusalem where He would spend His final days. To enter the City of Jerusalem on a donkey while the crowd was shouting Hosanna to the Son of David, acknowledging Him as the Messiah, was not exactly the entrance of a King at war, but a King of Peace. He knew that entering Jerusalem, where He was not welcome, would get Him into trouble. His presence would create tension and a decisive confrontation with the authorities and the religious leaders in Jerusalem,

says New Testament Scholar, R.T France. He walked the walk of courage and faith that would lead Him to the ultimate suffering on the cross.

Jesus was a humble King of the people. He proclaimed a message of love and peace, not of coercion, like an earthly king, says France. He lived a life of compassion and justice for everyone, and all earthly Kingdoms should and must yield to this love that comes from God! The implication of this Divine love would mean a different way of ruling and caring for all people. Filled with the Spirit of God, who gave Him strength to carry on, He would face those who did not approve of His message and actions. Despite being in danger, he would not be silenced during His time in Jerusalem. This is the powerful message of Palm Sunday...the meek and mild servant leadership of Jesus Christ was in direct opposition of the world's idea of Kingship and authority, and yet He was still the King and Messiah of the crowd who followed Him. He so wanted the world of His time to know about this love of God for all people.

### **A Jubilant Crowd with a Clear Message**

Yes, Christ was not alone on this journey. He was surrounded by a large, brave crowd; those who followed him from Galilee and elsewhere, and those who went ahead of Him. This was a crowd filled with utter joy and a deep conviction that He was their King, the Son of David, the One Who comes in the Name of the Lord, the Messiah! I can only imagine the depth of their joy, because of what He had done for them. He was the humble Man from Nazareth who traveled around to preach the Good News that God loved them, no matter who they were, and only wanted the best for them. He healed many, and they were witnesses to those miracles. He cared, he showed them the path of love and compassion. They must have known that he was endangering Himself entering Jerusalem, so they were not going to let Him go it alone. They gathered greenery and palms, and together with their cloaks they threw it all on the road where He traveled! What a celebration and respect and honor for this Man of Nazareth.

This crowd had a clear message: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest! Look at us, He loves us, and we stand with Him! So, here we are. We are entering Jerusalem with Him!

## **Conclusion**

We know the consequences of Jesus' decision to enter Jerusalem. We are approaching Holy week, when we will remember the crucifixion, the pain His family and His disciples had to endure. Let us remember though, that Christ had a crowd with Him then, lifting Him up, and giving glory to Him. Let us be the crowd today in our homes, shouting Hosanna to our King, Jesus Christ, who is greater than any threat we face today, or in the future. Let us pray without ceasing, and trust in the power of God to get us through and help us overcome this difficult season we're going through. Let us be a crowd filled with the Spirit of God who gives us the strength that Christ had on His own journey.

Even though we are not together physically as a congregation, I pray that this Palm Sunday will be a remembrance of the power and courage of a crowd who followed Christ into Jerusalem; a remembrance of the Son of God Who faced the end of His earthly life, not without hope, but with the knowledge that the cross is only the transition to the Resurrection, to life! May this Gospel message bear fruit in our hearts and give us that same faith and hope in the Resurrection, and may God bless and keep you. Amen.

### **Prayer and benediction:**

*Dear Lord, please fill us with Your Spirit now...*

*Protect us all, deliver us from evil and strengthen our faith in You*

*Fill us with love for You and one another, now and always.*

*Give us Your peace...*

*May the grace of God, and the love of Christ*

*and the presence of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever*

*Amen*