

Barre Congregational Church

March 24, 2024: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ **Palm Sunday**~

“Hosanna! Blessed is the One Who comes in the Name of the Lord!”

Our services can be found on our website at www.barrechurch.com and Facebook page.

Scripture Reading: Mark 11 v 1-11

I. Introduction:

In all or many of our achievements, we feel the need to celebrate our successes, and we also feel good when others celebrate with us. Our celebrations can take many forms, from a small gathering, or a more elaborate party, celebrating birthdays, an anniversary, Christmas, New Year and more. There are other forms of public celebrations, for example in sports, or political leadership where there is a winner and a loser. In these kinds of celebrations there are feelings of joy and feelings of disappointments and sadness, as well as negative reactions and actions.

II. Hosanna is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was filled with joy as the crowds around Him celebrated and shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!” and, “Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our father David!” His riding on a colt was a sign of an Old Testament tradition, where the king or government official for example Solomon with his coronation, entered Jerusalem on David's mule with numerous celebrations, (See 1 Kings 1 v 32 – 48). Jesus received the red-carpet treatment by the crowds, who spread branches, long grasses, palms, and their outer clothes on the road where Jesus was traveling. The Hebrew word for Hosanna, was used for a general shout of praise, “in the highest place, in heaven or in God’s presence”. Mark Strauss in his commentary on the Gospel of Mark says the crowds saw Jesus as the One who will come to reestablish the throne of David. He is their Messiah, for He had shown Himself to have the characteristics of someone whose ministry and person was that of God. His love and care and compassion felt to them like the Messiah would be. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey spoke to His intention to make Himself known and fulfill the prophetic word of Zechariah 9 v 9 that referred to a King who is humble, riding on a donkey, and victorious and righteous. He knew

the time had come to reveal Himself, even though it would also be a dangerous step to take. In Jerusalem, His Messiahship would bring Him directly in conflict with the religious leaders there.

Jesus had His disciples and friends to lean on during this time. The Gospels describe to us that He traveled from Bethany, which is the place where Lazarus and his sisters lived, and as His friends they were there to give Him the physical and emotional comfort He needed. He would be anointed at their home before taking this difficult journey.

III. Conclusion:

Palm Sunday is therefore a joyful celebration of the One who came to give His life for our salvation and reconciling us with God. It is also a reminder that His entry into Jerusalem led to His suffering and crucifixion. He would spend those last days still ministering and teaching and challenging the authorities, doing everything He could to convey the will of God. He also knew who would remain with Him, and who would leave Him, deny, and betray Him, and so He made peace with all those aspects of the journey He was on. Today we celebrate Him with our palms, remembering Him surrounded by the crowds who recognized Him as the King of Kings, with their humble red carpet made of palms and branches and clothing. Today we came to this sanctuary to express our joy for being forgiven for our sins, for being accepted by the Son of God for who we are, with our shortcomings and weaknesses, with no discrimination based upon any human-made distinctions, of race and gender, and culture and all kinds of things we tend to create to divide us. We are just here in His presence and in the presence of God, waving our own palms, saying thank you to the King who did not need much of a red carpet, whose whole being was about peace and love and acceptance. May God bless us on this day as we celebrate not only our own achievements, but the most significant achievement in the history of Christianity, the triumph of the King who gave His life for us, and for this world. He may have been criticized and resented by those who did not celebrate with Him, but He rose from the death and destruction in victory for everyone to witness. May God help us to surrender our lives to this Messiah. Amen.