

Barre Congregational Church

March 28, 2021: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ Palm Sunday ~

“Hosanna! Blessed is He 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 life it is nice and awesome to be recognized for what one has achieved; to receive an award or trophy in our various fields such as music, sports, at work and elsewhere. It makes us feel good and appreciated for all the hard work we put in. It is also nice to hear someone say thank you for what you have done, and to be appreciated for it. I was thinking about that as I was following in Jesus' footsteps as He arrived at the Mount of Olives looking towards Jerusalem and would make His entrance into the City.

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

Palm Sunday can almost be seen as the climax of the ministry and Person of Jesus the Christ. It is wonderful to see the recognition that was given to Him as He was entering Jerusalem. It was about Palm branches, and people shouting in jubilation at the sight of their Messiah.

Jesus was traveling from Jericho in the North, arriving at the Mount of Olives, and as He was looking West towards Jerusalem, one wonders what was going through His mind. This would be the end of His earthly journey before He would be crucified.

As He arrived there, Jesus took it upon Himself to arrange for His entry to Jerusalem. He was very specific as He instructed His disciples to go into the Village, where they will find a colt, tied up, was never ridden, and bring it to Him, with a message to anyone who would ask them about that, that the Lord needs it. They went into the village, and we see them putting their outer clothes on the donkey, to act as a saddle, He sat on it, and rode into the City of Jerusalem. There were crowds following Him and others who went ahead of Him. Let's imagine the scene, as the crowds were screaming, "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord! Blessed

is the coming Kingdom of our Father David!” They were throwing branches in front of Him, and spread their clothes out on the road, in honor of this man! The Palm tree was very special. The Land of Palestine was called by the Greeks and Romans, “The Land of Palms”, and the branches a symbol of victory, according to Revelations 7v9. This man whom they followed, this Rabbi, who performed miracles and spread a message of love and inclusion and compassion deserved to be honored like this.

Palm Sunday is therefore a day of celebration, recognizing our Lord and Saviour as the Messiah, sent by God for our salvation. The shouts of Hosanna, refers back to the book of Zechariah, Chapter 9 v 9 where it speaks of the coming Messiah, “See Your King comes, riding upon a colt, with people in jubilation “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!” Hosanna was a prayer invoking God’s saving action and was also a shout of acknowledging a famous Rabbi. The people who followed Him saw Him as their Messiah, the One whom they have been waiting for.

III. The Entrance to Jerusalem ushers in a new beginning

Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem marks a new beginning, says William Lane in his book on Mark. His ministry will continue and lead to conflict with the religious leaders. We see Him cleansing the temple, teaching some more, and then prepares the disciples for their ongoing ministry without Him. He encourages them to pray and have faith. Jesus came with a mission, even though the mission would be dangerous. It was a prophetic mission, making sure the temple would be acknowledged as the House of God, leaving the disciples with the Great Commandment and cautions them to be watchful in Mark 13 v 1-37.

Jesus knew that the jubilation and excitement about His presence would be short lived. He was appreciated by those who followed Him and became a threat to the leaders of the time. Riding on a colt, as the humble Messiah, He ushered in the Kingdom of the heavens, which would be resisted by the leaders of the time.

IV. Conclusion

Palm Sunday is a time for us to recognize our Lord and Saviour, His message of love for God and neighbor. His life was a life of acknowledging those who were humble, those on the margins, those who walked the journey with Him, because He was humble. He did not seek

the acknowledgment of earthly Kings. He did not receive any award for all He had done, like those of us do. He was however, the Messiah, the Heavenly King filled with everything the people needed, love and compassion and acceptance. It was something misunderstood by the religious leaders of the time. Palm Sunday is a day to cherish, and it teaches us about the Kingdom of the heavens that must be lived out in our own lives as followers of Christ. It is about shouting from the rooftops a message of love and hope and justice for all. It may get us into trouble, because even today, this kind of message of leveling the playing field where everyone is the same, equal in the eyes of God, is not accepted by many in power. We must live out this message, because it is a message of our Christ, who died for us, and whose death we will remember this coming Holy week. May God help us as we follow Christ in good times and difficult times. Amen