

SUNDAY March 29, 2026 "Ride on Ride ON"
Mark 11:1-11 Psalm 118 837 VU (P1,3,4) Matthew 26:1-5. 6-13

Palm Sunday is the Sixth Sunday of our Lenten journey which for Jesus was made very clear to him by God at a young age-- he is the messiah the saviour of people. How this was to be accomplished was not always made clear yet Jesus knew that it he had to die in order to give people the hope that they did not have.

For some of us, this Lenten journey is not an easy path. There is uncertainty because of health issues caused by disease, post surgeries, treatments for our physical selves. Yet there is also the uncertainty of where we are walking, what road we are turning on and just what lies ahead. There is also the questions and concerns which arise as a result of being in this Lenten wilderness which causes us to grow weary. As well, there is the need for confession of sins and seeking forgiveness. But most importantly is the need for trust- in ourselves, others, and in Jesus.

Jesus knew he had to die in order to rise again. He was not sure about it all yet he put in place the words of the prophet Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness where he learned more about his life's purpose as the Son of Man and as God's Son. He probably had many scattered dreams, thoughts and doubts about his future. But Jesus is also the Son of God and He knew that the people needed a saviour as had been promised generations before.

So he begins the beginning of the end of his journey from the wilderness to death and hope. He knows the words of the prophecy and he sees the people of the city coming to him with joy and laughter, with hope in their hearts and wonder in their eyes if this man who rides on a donkey can even speak up and talk with those in authority to bring about change for them all. They wonder about justice and empathy and they too think of themselves as to what can this itinerant preacher, son of a carpenter do for them?

The people shout Hosanna. Save us. The Hebrew words yasha ("deliver, save") and anna ("beg, beseech") combine to form the word that, in English, is "hosanna." Literally, hosanna means "I beg you to save!" or "please deliver us!" From what are they needing to be saved. There are different possibilities- Roman oppression- foreign taxation, military control. Corruption in temple leadership. And just life itself.

The people hoped Jesus would overthrow the Romans and restore Israel's freedom. They wanted an earthly king to enable them to get away from leaders who were self- serving.

Yet Jesus brought a deeper meaning of being saved-- or salvation. He took upon himself to be the Passover Lamb to save all people from sin and death. The Jewish tradition of Passover is described in Exodus 12. The people took care of sheep and goats and on the evening of Passover they were to slaughter the animals. Some of the blood was then put on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. They were to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. They are to eat it with their cloak tucked into belts, sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste and be ready. It is the Lord's Passover.

That night God would pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you and you will be safe you and your household.

Jesus becomes the sacrificial lamb and it is in Christ alone that hope is found for each of us, if we believe in Jesus as the one who is Saviour. The question is simple on this Palm Sunday- why are you shouting Hosanna in your life? Is it to be saved from within --from physical ailments, spiritual challenges or is it because of brokenness. There is much injustice and violence in the world today but we wonder if we can do anything about it? Jesus answered this "Hosanna" plea which led to his death and not a political throne. So that we could have something-- hope. Hope that goes beyond the road to Calvary and JEsus' death. Hope that leads us to the tomb to mourn, yes, but to also rejoice in possibilities. Possibilities which include Jesus conquering of death that is rising to new life in order that we need not fear the end of our earthly life because Jesus brings us the gift and promise of eternal life. But we must believe.

And so when Jesus sits and eats the Passover meal with his disciples- they know the tradition of lamb's blood, but they may not understand that Jesus is the sacrificial lamb whom they would soon see dying on a cross.

Palm Sunday is filled with joy and wonder, with heartache and hurt. The people are in need. We too are in need and even over 2000 years when we wave the branches or wear the palm crosses we share with others-- our faith that Jesus will lead us into something better.. Down the path, down the road and even into eternity.

Jesus rides into Jerusalem-- not with horses and chariots or in today's equivalent with flagged motor coaches and secret service agents- but on a simple borrowed donkey. There is no band only the voices of people who shout with joy and love, and with hope in their hearts that Jesus will do something-- Hosanna. They do not know how this may be accomplished but those who believe that he is the Son of Man, Son of God-- they follow and make it a parade into the city.

As Jesus rides into Jerusalem Jesus goes into the temple, looks around at everything because it was late. He along with the disciples go out to Bethany which is a two mile walk. And it is there they stay overnight, only to travel back into the city the next day.

Jesus rides the donkey into the city with much expectation on the hearts of everyone who see him and want him to do something to help and save them. Jesus rides into the city without everyone even knowing that the Messiah is coming. Passover gatherings are starting to take place with families; the city is getting busy but Jesus keeps on riding.

Jesus knows the path he much ride on. Jesus knows that the road ahead will lead to his death. And he also knows the road he travels is not easy. But he rides on. As our hymn suggests though, he is not riding alone- the winged squadrons of the sky-- the angels themselves look on with sad and wondering eyes to see him as the one who will die for the sake of others. But there is hope-- for when he bows his head in death he will rise again with strength, power and reign as the king of kings, saviour and risen Christ. This is our faith this is our hope. Thanks be to God.

PRAYER

Jesus our saviour we praise you as we remember your triumphant entry into Jerusalem and as you ride on to the path which leads to Calvary. We too are riding on our faith in you knowing that you will guide our way to the cross and to the empty. You will also guide us to become renewed in faith and with hope for what lies ahead. Be with us we pray as we seek to glorify your name. Hear us O God as we pray in silence. Amen.