



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on April 10th 2022 at 10:45, meeting once more at Bethesda Chapel.

Whilst some are able to meet in person, others we know are still at home. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

Our Palm Sunday service today is led by Colin, looking towards Easter from the Old Testament perspective, and today Alec plays the piano for us, whilst Joy is deployed at the back of the church, in charge of the audio-visual department!!

Colin welcomes everyone to Bethesda Chapel, and begins by asking Joy to adjust the volume on the PA, as we start our service with a responsive reading from Psalm 118, Colin being the leader and the congregation reading the words in bold type.

Leader:	This is the day the Lord has made!
All:	Give thanks to the Lord for he is good!
Leader:	The Lord is our strength and our song
All:	Give thanks to the Lord for he is good!
Leader:	He has become our victory!
All:	Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!
Leader:	His faithful love endures forever
All:	Give thanks to the Lord for he is good!

Colin confirmed that everyone had been given a Palm cross, then shared that he had hoped to lead a Palm Sunday procession, but had decided this was probably not sensible! However all were encouraged to wave their Palm crosses,(or branches) as we sang together, whilst shown on the screen at Bethesda was a Palm Sunday procession filmed in Jerusalem in 2018:

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!
Lord, we lift up your name, with our hearts full of praise,
Be exalted, O Lord, my God, Hosanna in the highest!

Glory, glory, glory to the King of kings!
Glory, glory, glory to the King of kings!
Lord, we lift up your name, with our hearts full of praise,
Be exalted, O Lord our God, Hosanna in the highest!

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, to the King of kings!
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, to the King of kings!
Lord, we lift up your name, with our hearts full of praise,
Be exalted, O Lord our God, Hosanna in the highest

Carl Tuttle CCLI SONG # 21545
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CCL No 5664

Barbara shared that this had brought back memories of a Palm Sunday Procession at Leamington Rd some 50+ years ago, when the children of the Sunday School, paraded round the church. Her daughter, Elizabeth, was carried by Brenda's mother, who looked after the children in the creche, and led the procession.

Colin led us in a short prayer

Our Heavenly Father, on this day your Son entered the holy city of Jerusalem and was proclaimed King by those who spread their garments and palm branches along his way, singing 'Hosanna in the highest!'. And yet the King they welcomed was the Servant King, the King who washed his disciples' feet, the King who came not with an army but a weapon so powerful that not even death could resist, the sacrificial love of God laid out upon a cross. Lord God, as we sing our 'Hosannas' today may we remember also what you were riding toward: the suffering and rejection, the pain and humiliation, and the cruel cross. And let us look forward to the joy of Easter Day when you rose from death to reign forever. Help us, as we daily lay our lives before you, to live the resurrection life that acknowledges Jesus as Lord and King over our lives. For his name's sake. Amen.

Colin then shared the notices for this week:

- Coffee Morning – Tuesday 12, 10.00 – 12.00
- Fellowship Meeting and Maundy Thursday Communion – Thursday 14, 19.30 – 20.30
- Good Friday Service – Friday 15, 10.45, followed by walk around district, 11.45, with refreshments – hot cross buns wanted!
- Movie Morning – Saturday 16, 10.30 – 12.00
- Gospel in the Passover - Saturday 16, 18.30
- Easter Sunday Service and baptism – Sunday 17, 10.45
- New Life Church – Sunday service this week, 13.00
- St Luke's Baptismal service – Sunday 17, 18.00

Hywel asked if he could speak, and on being told yes, thanked the fellowship for their prayers and support whilst he had been in hospital earlier, and probably more ill than he realised!! He is now feeling well enough to rejoin the fellowship, and trusts he is well on the road to recovery.

Janet then shared our first Bible Reading: Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?
The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by
a false god.

They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Saviour.
Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.
Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may
come in.

Who is this King of glory?

The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may
come in.

Who is he, this King of glory?

The Lord Almighty – he is the King of glory.

We join in song again as Alec plays:

Make way, make way, for Christ the King in splendour arrives.

Fling wide the gates and welcome Him into your lives!

Make way! (Make way!) Make way! (Make way!)

For the King of kings (For the King of kings)

Make way! (Make way!) Make way! (Make way!)

And let His kingdom in.

He comes the broken hearts to heal, the prisoners to free:
the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance, the blind shall see!

Make way! (Make way!)....

And those who mourn with heavy hearts, who weep and sigh;
with laughter, joy and royal crown He'll beautify.

Make way! (Make way!)....

We call you now to worship Him as Lord of all;
to have no gods before Him - their thrones must fall!

Make way! (Make way!)....

Graham Kendrick CCLI song # 121074

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Colin sets the scene: 'Two Triumphant entries,'

A Day of Two Processions

You might not know that Jesus' procession into Jerusalem was not the only procession the
city saw that day. Roman historians tell us that, in the year 30 AD, the governor of Judea,
Pontius Pilate, led a procession of Roman centurions and soldiers into the city of Jerusalem.

He knew it was standard practice for the Roman governor to be in the capital, especially

for these religious celebrations. It was the beginning of Passover, a Jewish festival that the Romans allowed. However, the Romans were equally aware that this festival celebrated the liberation of the Jews from another empire, the empire of Egypt.

Since the Romans had occupied this land by defeating the Jews and deposing their king about 80 years before, uprisings were always in the air. The last major uprising, long before Pilate's time, had been after the death of Herod the Great in 4 BC, just after the birth of Jesus. The uprising started in Sepphoris, about 5 miles from Jesus' boyhood home of Nazareth. Before it was over the city of Sepphoris, the capital of Galilee, and the town of Emmaus had been destroyed by the Roman army. After squashing the rebellion there, the Romans then marched on Jerusalem. After pacifying the city, they crucified over 2,000 Jews who were accused of being part of the rebellion. The Romans had made their intolerance for rebellion well-known. And so, on this occasion, Pilate had travelled with a contingent of Rome's finest from his fortified headquarters in Caesarea, to the stuffy, crowded, provincial capital of Jerusalem.



Colin asked the congregation to do a 'spot the difference'!!

Those at Bethesda were then able to watch a short animation of the first Palm Sunday before singing again, with Alec playing the piano:

Ride on, ride on in majesty!

Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry.

O Saviour meek, pursue your road,

with palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.
O Christ, your triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The angel armies of the sky
look down with sad and wond'ring eyes
to see th'approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh.
The Father on his sapphire throne
awaits his own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.
Bow your meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, your pow'r and reign

Henry Hart Milman
CCLI song # 2725907
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Our Prayers were led by Becky:

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear, what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

Indeed what would we do without Jesus to turn to?

No worry or problem is too big for Jesus, no worry or problem is too trivial for Jesus. We don't need to feel foolish or dependent, Jesus wants to share our highs and lows, our joys and sorrows, our ups and downs. He asks us to share good and bad with him. He wants us to know that he is there for us always. How great is that?

I have prayed a lot these last few weeks and always feel comforted. I don't always understand why things that happen do happen, but I can tell God this and ask him to give me the wisdom and courage to deal with whatever problem I am facing.

So this morning as we bring our prayers to our Heavenly Father, let us do so unashamedly, with no embarrassment, just as we would talk to our earthly father or mother.

Lord the world as we know is a very troubled world at the moment. The war continues to rage in Ukraine and Afghanistan and lots of other far-flung countries. Cruelty and hatred and arrogance being the main reason. The perpetrators have no conscience and are causing so much pain and anguish. Please Heavenly Father, 'intervene'. We know you can do miracles. Please Lord even at this late stage we ask you to change the mind

of Putin and his followers. We humbly ask for no more blood to be shared, no more loving families torn apart.

We pray for the situation with the NHS. The NHS are worked off their feet and still there is a shortage of beds and staff. Appointments are being cancelled and sick people are waiting months for treatment. Lord we need your help here for us to understand. We ask for patience and a hope that things will get back to normal soon.

We ask for your intervention also God for our young children who seem able to get their hands on drugs and knives and all sorts of vices. Kids as young as 12 who should be just **children** at this young time of their life.

We pray to you this morning for the families where there is not so much money comes in. The cost of living is increased so very much. Every food item household bills, energy bills, petrol, have all increased by a substantial amount. This places terrible hardships on lots of families and on relationships. More kiddies will be deprived and simple family treats may have to stop. More and more of peoples jobs are being cut, which will cause depression on family members. This can lead to bullying and cruelty, lack of esteem and confidence. Lord please give wisdom and sympathy to our government at this time, change their ways of thinking Father God.

This week Father I have become a great grandma for the first time, as you will know. We think about tiny new babies being born into this sad world. Our family praise your name and thank you graciously for our beautiful gift. Our baby will be deeply loved and cherished. We pray to you merciful God for the not so lucky children. For the poorly kids, for the less perfect ones, for the unwanted and neglected children. We thank you that so much can be done today to help parents care for the little ones who are less fortunate. This is why we need our NHS to get back on its feet. We need for nursing staff and midwives who perform such amazing jobs to feel encouraged, not overworked and guilty to their patients and colleagues and to their own families, because they are so bone tired and overworked. We bring these prayers to you Lord because we know we can, and that you are listening.

We pray for our church here at Bethesda. We pray for our Pastor Alec and for our deacons. Each and everyone works so hard, so willingly, to honour you Heavenly Father. They have families and relatives who need time and help from them. Please continue to fill our church as you are doing, let us be attractive to new people who see us and come into contact with us. Thank you for the new visitors we have recently and for each single church member.

We thank you for our charity workers and aid workers, for all the volunteers who do work tirelessly behind-the-scenes, and we often forget about. We remember Jackie and Brian Chilvers and the ongoing work they continue to do with love and patience. We thank you for each other, for our families, for our friends and our neighbours.

We thank you for every little kindness shown to us each day, a phone call, a friendly smile, someone holding the door for you, asking if you can manage.

We thank you for the spring flowers in gardens, for the birds coming back to our trees, for our postmen and binmen and milkmen who just make life normal. Thank you for groups of laughing smiling school kids coming home from school, even though they don't always follow the highway code. Oh Lord, we do know how much we are blessed and loved by you and it is truly wonderful.

As I conclude my prayers we ask you to remind us every day to pray for one another, to think how we could help each other by just a small act of kindness. To be your eyes and ears and hands and feet. Show us what we can do, what to say, to show kindness and love. Help us to be like you Lord Jesus.

Always loving, always forgiving, always always there to listen to us any time day or night, we need to never struggle on our own. Amen.

As Colin shares his message, he begins by reading: Zechariah 9, verse 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.

In recent months, we have seen on our television screens the terrible and tragic results of the brutal policies of a powerful despot, especially his willingness to treat people, particularly the people of Ukraine, with utter contempt. But I don't know why this should surprise us, for Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, is not unique in this respect. He is the most recent of a long line of tyrants, stretching way back into history, who have used their power in a corrupt and cruel way. A Victorian statesman once said that: 'All power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.' But this is only true of human government. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, and was welcomed by the crowd waving palm branches and shouting 'Hosanna to the Son of David', we are presented for the first time with a King whose reign is marked by righteousness and justice. Our short reading from Zechariah, written many centuries before the coming of Jesus, prophesied of what to expect when the King of Glory comes.

And yet, Zechariah 9 is largely about another king who was powerful and knew it—verses 1-8 describe the conquest of the Near East by Alexander the Great or some other equally powerful emperor. After describing this conquest, Zechariah then writes about the Messiah, in the verses we read. It seems to me that Zechariah is setting up a contrast between the Messiah and this worldly autocratic ruler. In a way, he says, 'Here's the type of powerful king the world creates, but here's a different kind of king.' And because the Messiah is a different kind of king, he causes great rejoicing. Notice what Zechariah says: 'Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!'

So, who is this King of Glory, described for us in Psalm 24, and what will he be like? Everything about this Palm Sunday event shows how different the sovereignty of Jesus is from the sovereignty of Putin, or any other of his monstrous predecessors, whether Hitler or Bonaparte, or even Alexander the Great. Unlike these, Jesus is the true universal king. He alone is God's Anointed One, the Messiah or Christ, and the King of kings. So, Jesus is the R-I-G-H-T(ful) King over the whole world, and for FIVE reasons.

First, he alone is a **Righteous** King. God greatly valued righteousness in the kings of Israel or Judah, his people, but he rarely ever got it. According to 2 Sam 23, the Lord had told David, *'When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.'*

King Jesus is righteous in that he never sinned. Hebrews 4 tells us: *'We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.'* Because Jesus was righteous, we can be righteous, for 2 Cor 5 declares: *'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.'* You see, we're not able to be righteous on our own, because each one of us is deeply flawed by nature, and each one of us, I'm sure, has done things we are ashamed of and would want to keep secret. Yet, Jesus is able to make us righteous. Those who put their faith and trust in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross are made righteous in the eyes of God. So, let me ask you this morning, are you righteous in the eyes of God?

Second, he is an **Inclusive** King. Jesus came to save. As King, this puts him at great variance with the likes of Alexander the Great, who never came to save, but to kill and conquer. Think about how inclusive Jesus was in his earthly ministry. From Roman centurions to tax collectors, and from the sick and diseased to the disabled and dying, Jesus' ministry crossed all the accepted and acceptable social barriers and boundaries of his time in order to reach out with salvation to all kinds of people, regardless of who they were and what they had done. He treated all people with infinite respect and concern, for God's kingdom is open to all.

Concerning Jesus, Peter said to the Sanhedrin, *'Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.'* Because Jesus is a saving king, you and I can be pardoned for our sin. *'God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins.'* We know that we are sinful, and we also know that with this sin we cannot enter the heavenly kingdom God has promised. However, Jesus has come to save us from everything that would prevent us from entering into God's realm of blessing. Has he saved you from your sin?

He is a **Gentle** King. Unlike the brutality of earthly rulers, God's Chosen king is gentle. Jesus himself claimed to be gentle, for on one occasion he told his audience *'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.'* He was gracious; that is why the crowds were attracted to him. On the way to

Jerusalem, as they passed through the town of Jericho, he was in the midst of a crowd that clearly wanted him to get to the capital as quickly as possible to see what he would do, for they knew 'sparks would fly'. But he took time out to answer the cries of a blind beggar called Bartimaeus, who cried out to the 'Son of David' (a title of the Messiah) to heal him, even though some in the crowd were yelling at him to be quiet. Jesus stopped and gave Bartimaeus all the time he needed to explain himself. Jesus then healed him.

You see, Jesus is not too busy to care for us, no matter how insignificant we might think we are. He wants to listen to the appeals of your hearts and desires to heal you of everything that might hold you back from being a follower of the King of kings.

He is a **Humble** King. The king comes riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Kings in the Ancient Near East often rode on mules, but this king rides on a common donkey. That he rides on a donkey rather than a mule is likely more a symbol of humility than royalty. You don't really associate humility with kingship. Royalty, both ancient and modern, has generally believed that they had a divine right to rule. Although he had a multitude of divine rights, he willingly laid them aside for us. In appealing to the Philippians to be humble Paul reminded them of Jesus' example: *'Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!'* Think about the humility of Jesus! He was the Creator, but his first bed was a trough from which some of his creation ate. He was a Lawgiver, but he became subject to those laws himself. He deserved nothing but praise and worship from humans made in his own image, but he allowed himself to be nailed to a cross by humans that he might save us.

He is a **Tranquil** King, for he is the Prince of Peace. Instead of riding upon a war horse, King Jesus came riding into Jerusalem, the seat of King David, on a donkey, which was not only a symbol of humility but also a symbol of peace. You see, Jesus is in the business of peace-making. Additionally, verse ten reads, *'I will take away the chariots of Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations.'* Prophecies about the coming of the Messiah often depict the new age as an age of peace. For example, a prophecy in Isaiah tells us: *'He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.'*

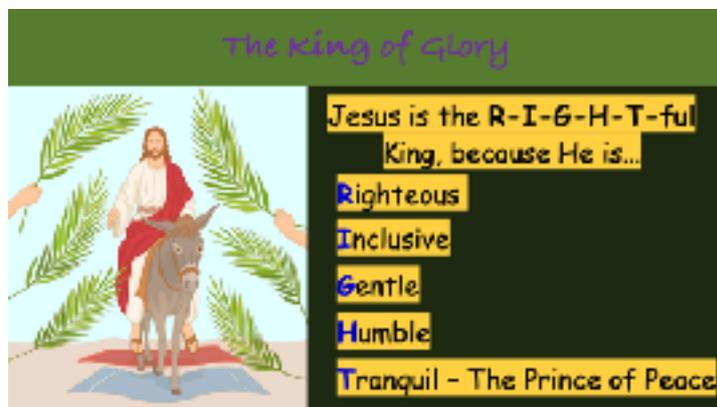
But true peace always starts in the human soul, both heart and mind. For as one ancient sage put it:

*If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.
If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.*

*If there is to be peace between neighbours,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.*

The Old Testament prophecy in Ezekiel 36 regarding a 'new heart' and a 'new spirit' is fulfilled in Jesus' gospel teaching on spiritual renewal, for the gospel of Christ is a gospel of peace, its message emphasising the importance of peace in our inner-selves. This renewal starts with peace with God, for we were created to live in perfect communion with our heavenly King. And that vacuum at the core of each of our lives can only be filled with the Spirit of God, though people find a thousand and one things to try to placate that great yearning in all of us.

May we all find peace with God in and through Christ this coming Easter, so that we are all able to say with the Apostle Paul that *'Jesus loved me and gave himself for me.'*



We bring our time together with another marching song, an old hymn:

Come, we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known.
Join in a song with sweet accord, join in a song with sweet accord,
and thus surround the throne, and thus surround the throne.

We're marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion.

We're marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.

The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets,
before we reach the heav'nly fields, before we reach the heav'nly fields,
or walk the golden streets, or walk the golden streets. [Refrain]

We're marching to Zion....

Then let our songs abound, and ev'ry tear be dry.
We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground, we're marching thro' Immanuel's ground,
to fairer worlds on high, to fairer worlds on high.

We're marching to Zion....

Isaac Watts, Music Robert Lowry
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Colin invited everyone to share the Grace together:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

(The service closed with a video of a Ukrainian choir singing "Precious Lord, take my hand")

Lyrics & Music by Thomas A. Dorsey

Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand; I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm lone;
through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
take my hand precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear precious Lord linger near, when my light is almost gone
Hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall:
take my hand precious Lord, lead me home.

When the darkness appears and the night draws near, and the day is past and gone;
At the river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand :
take my hand precious Lord, lead me home.

Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand; I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm lone;
through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
take my hand precious Lord, lead me home.