

Jesus faces up to his Challenge!

Scriptures: John 12:12-19, Psalm 118:25-26, Zephaniah 3:16

After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the grave, the Religious leaders found themselves in a flat spin – they were petrified of: Losing power; losing control; losing income; losing their Temple; an uncertain future.

- **John 11:47** – “If we let Jesus go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our Temple and our Nation.”
- **v.53 – 54** - “So from that day they plotted to take his life (Jesus). Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews...”

John 12:12-19 – The Triumphal Entry

- John 12:13 – *“The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him.”*

“They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!” – v.13 (Psalm 118:25-26)

Psalms 113-118, are known as the Hallel (meaning **Praise God**) and are linked with the coming of the Messiah.

- Jesus walked straight into the midst of his enemies. Into the lion’s den.

William Barclay - “Jesus was an outlaw with a price upon his name.”

Jesus knew what lay ahead for him, yet he was still willing to go ahead with this journey. Jesus had chosen LOVE as his life’s purpose.

- “No greater love has a man than this – that he lay down his life for his friends.” – **John 15:13**

Jesus had prepared his whole life for this moment!

Jesus's entry into Jerusalem speaks of love and courage and sends a message in a clear, unmistakable fashion - "You will now see who I am and then you will have to decide who I am for yourself."

"Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, 'Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.'" – v.14-15 (Zechariah 9:9)

"Do not be afraid, O daughter of Zion; _____" (Substitute your name)

- What are you fearful of today?
- How much control do you have over your fears?

Deuteronomy 31:6 – "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Perhaps Jesus asks each one of us - "Will you not accept me as YOUR King and Lord and enthrone me in your heart?"

"At first his disciples did not understand all of this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realise that these things had been written about him..." – **John 12:16**

John 12:19 – "So the Pharisees said to one another, "See this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him."

"For God so loved *the world*, that he gave his one and only son. That whoever believes in him would not perish, but have eternal life." – **John 3:16**

Question: Why do we worship/follow Jesus?

The crowds turned on Jesus and changed their shouts from "Hosanna" to "Crucify!"

Mark Labberton - *"What is at stake in our worship? **Everything!** Worship names what matters most: ... Worship turns out to be the dangerous act of waking up to God and to the purposes of God in the world, and then living lives that actually show it."*

☞ *Palm Sunday challenges us to ask why we follow Jesus.*