



BREAKING OPEN

Scripture Study

Palm Sunday



The Triumphant Entry: Kingship That Walks Toward Binding

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A weekly reflection based on the teachings at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville, together with a study guide based on the readings, some liturgical resources RCL Lectionary, and a weekly devotion

Revised Common Lectionary Related

Palm/Passion Sunday

Matthew 21.1-11

Psalm 118.1-2, 19-end

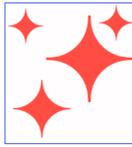
Liturgy of the Passion:

Isaiah 50.4-9a

Psalm 31.9-16

Philippians 2.5-11

Matthew 26.14 - end of 27



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Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collects

Almighty and everlasting God, who,
of thy tender love towards mankind,
hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus
Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to
suffer death upon the cross, that all
mankind should follow the example of his
great humility; Mercifully grant, that we
may both follow the example of his
patience, and also be made partakers of
his resurrection; through the same Jesus
Christ our Lord.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever sensed a profound change coming, like the stillness before a storm? Drawing on Palm Sunday's sacred tension, where triumph and sacrifice converge like storm clouds gathering over still waters.

Through Jesus' deliberate choice to enter Jerusalem on a donkey—not a warhorse—we discover a kingship built on humility rather than force.

As we journey through Lent toward Holy Week, this message challenges us to follow Christ with Thomas's clear-eyed loyalty, ready to walk the path wherever it leads.

What does true courage look like in the face of certain suffering?

Jesus' entry wasn't a moment of accidental heroism but intentional surrender. While the crowds shouted "Hosanna" with dreams of political victory, Jesus rode in on a donkey – a powerful symbol of humble kingship – knowing full well that the path ahead led not to a throne but to a cross.

There is a striking parallel between Lazarus being unbound and Jesus walking toward his own binding, revealing how true love steps toward suffering rather than away from it. Through Thomas's clear-eyed loyalty and the crowd's misunderstood praise, we're challenged to examine our own faith: Will we follow Jesus not only in moments of celebration but also through the narrow paths of sacrifice?

This message calls us to embrace authentic discipleship that doesn't seek to avoid cost but chooses to stay faithful even when the way grows dark.



As we walk lightly on sacred ground,
teach us Lord to make known your kingdom,
and let this reflect in all that we do and say.

The Triumphant Entry

Sometimes, by the Lakes, you sense change drawing near.

The water is still.

The air holds its breath.

Out across the water, a line forms on the horizon.

Nothing has broken the stillness. No wind. No rain.

But you know.

You can feel it within the stillness.

Something is about to arrive, and once it does, there is no turning back.

Palm Sunday carries that same hush.

Matthew calls it a triumphal entry. But this is not a pause in Lent.

Not a sudden turn toward celebration.

The long journey draws near.

The threads are gathered, held in waiting.

Lent has asked us to remember where we have been tested,
how we have been shaped,
and what we have learned about the way of Christ.

And Palm Sunday does not break that journey.

It brings it into focus.

It urges us to see the track beneath our feet again.

A Different Kind of Kingship

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus enters Jerusalem on purpose.

Nothing is accidental.

He does not stumble into danger.

He walks toward what waits.

Every point matters.

He rides a donkey, not a warhorse.

The world expects power to arrive with force.

But Jesus comes gently.

His kingship is not built on fear,
but on humility, on surrender.

He fulfils the promise spoken by the prophet:

a king who comes not to dominate,
but to serve.

The crowd cries out: Hosanna.

A word we often hear as praise, but it is more than that.

It is a plea: "Save us." A cry for deliverance.

A cry that does not yet know what it will cost.

The crowd dreams of victory.

Jesus knows what the crowd cannot see.

He knows their cheers will soon fade.

He knows the branches raised in hope will soon be dropped.

He knows the road ahead leads not to a throne, but to a cross.

And still, he steps through the gate.

Open Gates, Costly Praise

Psalm 118 gives us the language of this moment:

"Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them."

The gates are open.

But they do not open onto comfort.

They open onto cost.

These are not gates of escape.

They are gates of entry.

Praise, in this place, is not escape. It is the choice to stay.

To stay.

To keep walking, even when the way is hard.

The psalm speaks of the stone rejected becoming the cornerstone.

But the stones in this story are not only signs of hope.

They are also heavy, real.

There is a stone that seals a tomb.

Lazarus Unbound, Jesus Bound

In John's Gospel, just before this entry into Jerusalem, Jesus stands before that tomb. And he says:

"Unbind him, and let him go."

Lazarus walks free. Life breaks into death.

But that moment sets the next step.

As of that day, the path is set. The gift given to Lazarus becomes the path that leads Jesus toward death.

Lazarus is unbound. Jesus walks toward binding.

The crowd celebrates power over death.

Jesus prepares to enter death itself. Lent has led us here.

Week by week, Lent has asked us to turn inward, to practice honesty and repentance, to face our limits and our longings.

It has taught us to release what is false, to name the places where we hold back surrender, and to watch for grace moving quietly.

Now, as Palm Sunday comes, those lessons gather,
leading us to the threshold where praise and sacrifice meet.

Life is not grasped.
Not protected.
Not held on to.
It is provided.

Knowing What Lies Ahead

What deepens this moment is not the crowd's joy.
It is what Jesus knows. He enters Jerusalem knowing:
that cheers will thin,
that voices will fall silent,
that he will be arrested, restrained, and accused.

The donkey is not only a sign of humility.
It is a sign of seeing with clear eyes. Jesus sees the moment for what it is. He
does not turn excitement into safety. He does not mistake praise for faithfulness.

He simply walks forward.

Thomas: Clear-Eyed Loyalty

And then there is Thomas. Earlier, when Jesus spoke of returning to Judea,
where danger waits, the disciples hesitate. Fear hangs in the air.
And Thomas says:

“Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

He does not speak with cynicism.
He does not yet speak with resurrection faith.
He speaks with something rarer.
Loyalty that sees with clear eyes, not soften the journey.
He does not pretend the road will be easy.
He names the cost.
He sees what the crowd does not.

To follow Jesus now is not to avoid risk.
It is to share the risk.
He does not yet know how the story will end. But he knows enough.
Faithfulness means stepping forward with eyes open to what is ahead.

The Question of Palm Sunday

So Palm Sunday asks us another question\.

Not:

Will we praise Jesus?

But:

Will we follow him when praise no longer shelters us?

Because this is the shape of Christ's kingship:

Not domination.

Not control.

Not seizing power.

But self-giving love.

Love that does not turn away from suffering.

Love that steps toward suffering.

Walking the Road

Lent has brought us here.

Not to linger at the gates.

But to step through.

Awake to what is coming.

Honest.

Open

Like watching the sky darken above the water, we sense what is drawing near.
And still, we step forward into what comes.

The threads are gathered once more.

The journey continues.

Lazarus walks free.

Jesus rides in, knowing he will be bound.

Thomas sees the danger.

The crowd celebrates, and Christ keeps walking the road.

Final Movement

So the question remains:

Will we walk with him?

Will we take each step, even when the way leads through shadow and
silence, is trusting the path worth following?

Not only when the road is lined with branches, but when it grows narrow.

Not only when the crowd is loud, but when the hush falls.

Because the entry is triumphant, not because suffering is left behind
but because

it does not turn aside.

Discussion Questions

Lent 6

Opening Group Questions (for discussion)

Where do you recognise moments in life when something is “about to arrive,” and there is no turning back?

“Something is about to arrive, and once it does, there is no turning back.”

Palm Sunday is not an interruption but a threshold. Like the stillness of settled weather, it invites us to notice when God is leading us forward into something we cannot control.

What does it mean to cry “Hosanna” — not as praise, but as a plea?

“A word we often hear as praise... but it is a plea: ‘Save us.’”

If Hosanna is a cry for rescue, then Palm Sunday becomes less about celebration and more about honest dependence. What are we truly asking Christ to save us from?

How do you understand the connection between Lazarus being unbound and Jesus walking toward being bound?

“Lazarus is unbound. Jesus walks toward binding.”

John places these moments side by side. Freedom for one leads to a cost for another. What might this reveal about the nature of love that gives itself away?

Where might you be called to follow Christ with the kind of honesty Thomas shows?

“Faithfulness means walking forward with eyes open.”

Thomas does not pretend the road is safe. He names the risk and follows anyway. Where is faith calling not for certainty, but for clear-eyed loyalty?

What does it mean to follow Jesus when praise no longer protects you?

“Palm Sunday asks not if we will praise Jesus, but if we will follow him when praise no longer protects us.”

The crowd’s welcome is real — but temporary. Discipleship begins where applause fades. What does it look like to remain when the road becomes quieter, harder, and more costly?

This five-day devotional will take a deeper dive into this weekend's sermon, exploring the themes of humility, sacrifice, and loyal faith as embodied by Jesus on Palm Sunday.



Day 1

Matthew 21:9

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus enters Jerusalem with purpose and humility, embodying a different kind of kingship. Rather than arriving on a war horse, He chooses a donkey, signifying peace and gentleness. This act challenges the world's perceptions of power and leadership, revealing that true kingship is not about dominance, but genuine service and love. As Jesus approaches, the crowd cries "Hosanna," a plea for salvation, yet unaware of the cost involved in His mission.

This scene sets the tone for Palm Sunday, where the surface celebration conceals a deeper, more profound journey that Jesus willingly undertakes. His resolve and spiritual insight invite us to reflect on how we perceive leadership and power in our own lives.

- How does Jesus' entry into Jerusalem challenge your understanding of leadership?
- What does the word "Hosanna" mean to you in your current spiritual journey?
- How can you emulate Jesus' example of humble leadership in your daily life?
- Pray for the courage to lead with humility as Jesus did.
- Reflect on areas in your life where you might need to relinquish control to God.

Day 2

Psalms 118:19-20

The gates mentioned in Psalm 118 symbolise not an escape from challenges but an entry into deeper commitment and costly praise. Palm Sunday opens these gates to a path requiring devotion and perseverance. Praise isn't about fleeing hardships but choosing to stay and continue the walk, even when it leads to difficulty.

This journey reminds us of the dual nature of God's calling—offering comfort while demanding our complete trust and surrender. As the gates open, we are asked to walk through, aware of the challenges, yet secure in God's presence and promises.

- What challenges have you faced that required you to demonstrate costly praise?
- How can you find the strength to continue walking through difficult paths in your life?
- Where do you see God opening gates for you today?
- Ask God for the courage to walk through open gates with faith.
- Pray for awareness to recognise God's presence in challenging times.

Day 3 John 11:44

Just before entering Jerusalem, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, proclaiming, "Unbind him, and let him go." This miraculous act is not simply about overcoming death, but about setting a path of liberation. As Lazarus walks free, it sets in motion the series of events that lead Jesus to His own sacrificial journey toward the cross.

Lent and Palm Sunday remind us of these patterns of unbinding and surrender, inviting us to let go of what binds us and embrace the freedom and cost of following Christ. The journey may lead through suffering, but it promises ultimate redemption.

- In what areas of your life do you need to be unbound, like Lazarus?
- How does the story of Lazarus challenge and inspire your faith?
- What are you willing to surrender to follow Christ more closely?
- Pray for the freedom from things that bind you spiritually.
- Offer gratitude for God's redemptive power in your life.

Day 4 John 12:12-13

The celebration of Palm Sunday, with its cries of "Hosanna," marks not only the beginning of Holy Week but also calls us to consider the true nature of faithfulness beyond initial excitement. Jesus enters Jerusalem amidst praise, fully aware of the silence and suffering He will soon face, yet He moves forward with divine purpose.

This moment asks us to reflect on our own faith journeys. It prompts introspection: do we continue to walk in faithfulness even when the fervour fades, and the path grows difficult?

- How do you continue to show faithfulness when initial excitement wanes?
- Why is it important to maintain faith in both joyous and challenging times?
- What sacrifices might be involved in your journey of faith?
- Seek strength from God to remain steadfast in faithfulness.
- Pray for the wisdom to discern when to celebrate and when to prepare for trials.

Day 5 John 11:16

Thomas' statement, "Let us also go, that we may die with him," reflects a clear-eyed loyalty that does not shy away from the realities of following Jesus into places of risk and uncertainty. He acknowledges the cost of discipleship, seeing courage and loyalty not as avoidance of danger, but as embracing the risk inherent in faithful following.

Palm Sunday and Holy Week challenge us to consider whether we are willing to step forward with eyes wide open, acknowledging the costs, and still choosing the path of love and sacrifice that Christ exemplifies.

- What does Thomas' loyalty teach you about the nature of true discipleship?
- How do you handle the uncertainties and risks in your own spiritual journey?
- Are you prepared to share in the risk of following Christ?
- Ask God for the courage to embrace the risks in your faith journey.
- Pray for eyes to see where God is leading, even when the way is uncertain.

End notes and further reading

End notes and further reading

Harrington, Daniel J Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew
Moloney, Francis J, SBD, Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of John
Johnson, Luke Timothy: Sacra Pagina: The Gospel on Luke
Collins, Raymond F., Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians
Andrew McGowan substack.com/@abmcg
N.T. Wright, Twelve months of Sundays Year A
Andrew Pratt, pastor and hymn writer (theworshipcloud.com)

Let your faith and relationships
be shaped by love and patience
for God's love is
revealed in lives, not letters.



Brabarlung Totem

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