

PALM SUNDAY DEVOTIONS



Call to worship: The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?'

Hymn/song:

StF 265 – [Ride on, ride on in majesty!](#)

StF 64 – [Praise is rising](#)

Prayers

Lord Jesus – our brother

All glory is given to you for showing us full and whole human life

True humanity bearing the presence and the power of God

Hosanna in the highest

Lord Jesus – our saviour

All glory is given to you for overturning the expectations of the world

Riding humbly into your holy city and conquering through sacrifice, pain and death

Hosanna in the highest

Lord Jesus – our friend

All glory is given to you for befriending the poor people,

The people with no self-esteem – those that others turned away from

For accepting us as your friends

Hosanna in the highest

Lord Jesus – our King

All glory is due to you from your people

If we remain silent – even the stones would cry out to praise you

We join the mountains and the comets to say

Hosanna in the highest

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord

Hosanna in the highest

Lord Jesus

Confession:

As we remember your journeying towards the cross we ask your forgiveness for our sins that mirror those of 2000 years ago

Forgive us our sins of expectation

For expecting you to change our lives, our church and our neighbourhood by using force – forgive us for waiting for you to batter down our walls of resistance – help us to open wide our gates and throw down our palms to let you ride in

Forgive us our sins of prejudice

Against the people we assume to be outside your kingdom

Forgive us for thinking of ourselves as better or more valuable to you than our annoying neighbour, the thief or the murderer

Help us to recognise our own poverty and surrender all to enter your kingdom

Forgive us our sins of fear

For being up-front when things are going well, and we can take the credit

Then making ourselves scarce when following your footsteps becomes lonely and painful

Forgive us for following the crowd and help us learn that to gain life we must lose many inferior goals

Lord Jesus Christ – through the power of your cross and resurrection – put to death our sin and lead us in renewed life indwelled with your Holy Spirit

Amen

Hymn StF 262: [All glory laud and honour](#)

Read these scriptures:

[Matthew 21: 1-17](#)

[Philippians 2: 5-11](#)

THOUGHTS:

Who would you like to talk to?

If you could talk to any character in the Bible (apart from Jesus) who would you choose to talk to?

What would you learn from them? What would you ask them?

Would you pick the man who owned the donkey?

1. The man with the donkey

We don't know much about the man with the donkey –

We don't know his name, or his circumstances – we know nothing – except for what he gave to Jesus.

'If anyone asks you why you are taking the donkeys, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them immediately.'

What questions could we ask the man with the donkeys?

Well 'how did you know?' How did you know it was Jesus who needed the donkey? Did you have a vision – or did an angel tap you on the shoulder? Was it hard to give?

Was it difficult to give something to Jesus for him to use?

So how did it feel to see your donkey in a procession – with Jesus on its back? Were you surprised – proud – annoyed?

Did you know – that your generous gift would be used to move Jesus and his ministry further down the road? Did it ever occur to you that God was going to ride your donkey?

Did you think for one minute that you would end up in all four gospels?

His answers might be able to help us – because sometimes we find it hard to give
We find it hard to give ‘immediately’ when the Lord asks
– and we like to keep our donkeys to ourselves.

Sometimes I get the impression God wants me to give him something and sometimes I don’t because I don’t know for sure – then later I feel bad because I’ve missed my chance. Sometimes I know he wants something – but I don’t give it because I’m too selfish or too busy.

Other times – too few times – I hear him and obey him and feel honoured that my gift may be used to carry Jesus into another place.

Still other times I wonder if my little gift is going to make any difference at all.

All of us have a donkey

You and I each have something which, if given back to God could, like the donkey, move Jesus and his story further down the road. Maybe you can sing, or teach, or visit, or preach, or clean, or hug, or cook.

When Jesus asks – do we gift immediately like the man with his donkey – or do we hold back?

Whatever is your gift – your gift belongs to Jesus.

It really does belong to him - your gifts are his just as the donkey was his – for he is the Lord of all creation.

2. If everything belongs to God – why does he ask?

In [Psalm 50](#) it says : I will not accept a bull from your house, or goats from your folds. For every wild animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the air, and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I wouldn’t need to tell you – for the world and all that is in it is mine.

[Acts 17: 24-25](#) says:

The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.

So this is a great mystery. Why, when everything is God’s – does he have to ask us to give anything?

The amazing thing is – God wants us to be involved in his great work of salvation. He wants us to be his colleagues – his co-workers in the mission of his Kingdom.

God gives to us generously – and will not force us to give anything back to him –

But he delights in a cheerful giver – one whose heart delights to give out of love and gratitude.

He delights when we give freely and readily and spontaneously.

It’s like he is asking us quietly and politely – for us to let him use what is his already.

3. God uses the small things of the world to shame the great

The guy who gave Jesus his donkey is just one in a long line of people who gave little things to a big God.

Maybe there will be a special display in heaven to celebrate God's uncommon use of common things.

There you might see Rahab's rope, Paul's bucket, David's sling, a wooded manger, a cloak that was rolled up in the boat for Jesus to sleep on, a bottle of ointment, and a borrowed tomb.

We don't know if these items will be in heaven – but the folk who used them will be!

There are people who do the same today: risk-takers, care-givers, front-line workers, prayer-warriors, disciples and stewards – who are ready to give whatever Jesus might need.

So when Jesus asks – it's up to us to give immediately and cheerfully – and leave the consequences to our awesome God.

Pray: Dear Jesus, help us to open wide our gates and throw down our palms to let you ride in. Help us to recognise our own poverty and surrender all to enter your kingdom. May we sing today with hope and longing: 'Hosanna' 'Save us' 'Rescue us' 'Help us'.

(Add your prayers for all who need rescuing or helping today)

The Lord's Prayer.

StF 327 - [Jesus is king](#)

StF 77 - [Give thanks to the Lord](#)

Or teach your children/grandchildren:

MHB 837 - Children of Jerusalem: 'Hark, hark, hark! While infant voices sing'

[Check out this video from Ghana](#)

May the Lord bless us and keep us, and save us from all evil. Amen.