

Entry To Jerusalem

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 April 1979

Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] Let our hearts be found acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen. I want to follow with you the story of Palm Sunday, as it's found in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, beginning in the 20th chapter and continuing through to the 21st chapter.

This event which took place was one which we have recorded and which we have made a part of the church year.

It's interesting that the story doesn't appear in the Gospel for the day. It only appears in the New Testament lesson for evening prayer on Palm Sunday. Nevertheless, the traditions of Palm Sunday are well established.

And the traditions of Palm Sunday go back well beyond the New Testament into something that was happening in the Old Testament. And I want to trace it for you this morning that you may understand something of the preface to the great events of the Passion of our Lord.

If you look in chapter 20 and verse 29 of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, you'll see that there was a great crowd following him.

[1 : 29] And this crowd presumably was made up of Galileans. Because of his birth or his bringing up in Galilee, Christ was always followed by Galileans.

And Galileans had a somewhat different accent so that they could be detected very easily. Furthermore, the Galileans were not particularly respected.

They were a rude country people. And because they were a rude country people, they weren't thought much of in Jerusalem. So that when Peter got into trouble in the story that was read for our New Testament lesson today, the thing that gave him away was his speech.

Because he was from Galilee, anybody in Jerusalem could tell he was from Galilee. And he gave himself away the moment he opened his mouth. And some of you who are possessed of rich accents from other parts of the world know the kind of problem that Peter had.

But this crowd then was following Jesus. And in chapter 20, verse 29, as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

[2 : 48] And if you look ahead in chapter 21, verse 9, the multitudes that went before and that followed, so that there was a crowd going before him, and there was a crowd following him.

And it's thought that the crowd had come out from Jerusalem to follow him, and the crowd from Galilee were following him.

And the two crowds mingled together as they went on their way up to Jerusalem. If you look in chapter 21 and verse 10, you discover that when he was come to Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

And it was strange, because you remember how Christ, when he was asked to change the water into wine, said, Mine hour is not yet come.

And one time previously in John, he was urged to go up to Jerusalem, and he said, My hour is not yet come. But now his hour was come. And he seemed to be committed to allowing the whole of Jerusalem to know that he was coming, and to see what they would do with him.

[4 : 06] So the city was stirred. He had traveled from Jericho, through Bethphagia, which probably was near Bethany, if it wasn't the same place, through the Mount of Olives, into Jerusalem, and then to the temple, which was in the heart of Jerusalem.

Now remember that in this gospel, the end of this Palm Sunday procession, was that he went into the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers, and them that sold doves, and he said, You have made my father's house a house of commerce, and not the house of prayer that it's meant to be.

And so he did all that was in his power to attract the attention of the authorities of the city, that he was present among them, and they had to deal with him.

He was going public. They were very much aware of him. And if you turn to John chapter 12, verse 19, you'll see that in the highest councils of the city, among the elders and the chief priests, they had seen the tumult that had occurred, and their conclusion was that all the world had gone after him.

Well, as the procession begins, and as it starts out from Jericho, something happens. The first thing that happens is there were two blind men seated there, and the blind men heard the noise of the crowd coming, and of course hearing is terribly important, and they probably understood it, and they asked and found that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

[6 : 02] And so they got up and shouted, Son of David, have mercy upon us. Now this is a kind of interesting parallel to the cry which was made later when they said, Hosanna to the Son of David.

Because if you remember verse 25 of Psalm 118, which we read at the beginning of the service, that was, Lord, help us. So that the blind men recognized almost first what was happening.

They recognized who Jesus was when they said, Son of David. They recognized what Jesus had come to do when they said, Lord, help us, using the Hebrew word for Hosanna.

And so the blind men recognized this first. The crowd moving along said, Don't disturb him. He's on his way to Jerusalem. But Jesus stopped and said, What do you want me to do for you?

And they said, Lord, that we might receive our sight. And he touched their eyes and they were given their sight. And that wasn't just a blessing to them.

[7 : 20] It was also a validation of what they had said. They had said, Son of David. And Jesus had said to them by healing them, Indeed, I am the Son of David.

And I am the one whom God has sent to save. The one whom God has sent to help you. And these two blind men recognized this even before the crowd had recognized what was happening.

And so the excitement in the crowd was continually being stirred up. And they were very excited about this procession as crowds tend to be.

And so Jesus was careful at this point to send two of his disciples over to a village to get a donkey. And the reason he got the donkey was something which was cited in Zechariah chapter 9. And this verse in Zechariah chapter 9 is particularly significant for us as Canadians because it's in the same passage that our national motto comes from.

[8 : 33] So Canada has a particular connection with Palm Sunday in that the same locus of Old Testament scripture gives rise to what happened on that day and what we pray for in our country.

Chapter 9, verse 9, of the book of the prophet Zechariah reads this way. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem.

Behold, thy king cometh unto thee. He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass and upon the colt the foal of an ass.

And I will cut off the chariots from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem and the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace unto the heathen and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea and from the river even unto the ends of the earth.

So from those two blind men in Jericho right to where we are today on the coast of the Pacific there is a strange continuity of fulfillment that Jesus is acknowledged as Lord and as King and his dominion is to spread from sea to sea.

[9 : 56] Well, this is how the crowd were gradually building up their understanding and their enthusiasm of what was happening.

And when Jesus deliberately took the donkey and sat on it he was indicating that everybody might know that he was a man of peace. That he wasn't going to bring out the militia that he wasn't going to challenge the Roman legions that he wasn't going to defy the city fathers he was coming to Jerusalem as his city and he was coming as the prince of peace.

And they recognized that he was a prince because they took off their garments and threw them in his way recognizing that this indeed was a royal personage.

I find it extremely interesting that the chief priests didn't know who Jesus was or weren't prepared to acknowledge it.

And the Roman authorities didn't know who Jesus was and weren't prepared to acknowledge it but in some way the crowd knew. The crowd understood who he was.

[11 : 08] And what strange compulsion was there among them to take off their garments and throw them in his way that he might walk among them as a king.

And not only was he a king among them but the tearing down of branches off the trees and waving them was part of the acknowledgement that a scripture which they had all known all their lives was now being fulfilled.

Fulfilled in a way which was a kind of rich reminder to them of what their faith was all about. We read part of Psalm 118 this morning but what they would do as they went in procession up to Jerusalem to one of the great feasts is to read or to sing all the Psalms from 113 through to 118 and this is called the Hallel and the crowd sang it as they went up to Jerusalem.

Singing the Psalms is a very old tradition and everybody should know how to do it and they had established this tradition among them and many of them probably from their earliest days had sung the Hallel Psalms 113 right through to 118 and as I told you at verse 25 of Psalm 118 they'd break out the palms and wave them in praise of him who was coming in the name of the Lord and that was for any pilgrim who was coming up to Jerusalem but in a strange way they recognized that all that tradition had found its fulfillment in Christ and that fulfillment in Christ was acknowledged when they said that he is the one that comes among us as the Lord's representative and he is the one that is deserving of praise and he is the one that we must acknowledge to be our king and so they picked up

Psalm 118 and said blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord and that means not just that he came as a messenger from but he came to represent the presence of God among them as God among men and he was deserving of the praise that belonged to God some of the elders of the city came and said to Jesus rebuke your disciples for they're creating a disturbance you know as authorities tend to do to try and keep everything in control to see that everything is done in a decent and orderly way but this was no time for that and Jesus replied if they didn't acknowledge me the very stones would cry out because this was a moment in history for Jerusalem her king had come the king that she had so long expected because of the teaching of the prophets the king that she had so long expected because of the hearing of the scriptures the king that she had so long expected because of the giving of the law all that God had promised was being fulfilled in this moment by the coming of Christ to his city and of course the city fathers wanted everybody to be quiet and not to be disturbed by and it would be interesting you see if this was the end of the story of the gospels a lot of people thought it should have been the end that here was the king coming to his city and he would come to his temple and he would be acknowledged as the great high priest and prophet and king who would come among his people in fulfillment of all that God had promised he went to his temple all right and there he found a place of robbers and not a place of prayer and so he came with a scourge and drove out the money changers and so the disturbance had begun and the king who would come among them came up against the organized crime in the city of Jerusalem and as you trace the events that follow you see that

[16 : 07] Christ was brought before Pontius Pilate and brought before Herod and brought before the high priests and this crowd which had acknowledged him as the king on one day within a few days were crying for his blood and he who had been hailed and acknowledged as the fulfillment of the prophets as the fulfillment of the law as the just king coming in fulfillment of prophecy to his city he was taken outside the city and there on a hill shaped like a skull he was crucified and there is no doubt that Christ knew step by step what was going to happen he knew the opposition that was there he had said to his disciples three times and they had never understood that he would be taken and by wicked hands would be crucified and slain

Peter had denied even the possibility of this but now it had happened and why should it happen why did it happen well it happened because the kind of kingdom that he was to establish was not a kingdom which can be brought to its fulfillment by the enthusiasm of a crowd this kingdom was to be established in accordance to the will and purpose of God and the city who that received him on this first Palm Sunday was the city which was to be both condemned by his coming to them and finding them not ready for him and the kingdom that was to be the starting place for the preaching of a new kingdom beginning at Jerusalem and under

Samaria and under all the earth would go out the news of a new kingdom a kingdom that nobody had ever even been able to imagine a kingdom of which Jesus Christ is still the heart and center and Jesus Christ is the one who commands our worship and our love so is the story of Palm Sunday to bring before us the person of Jesus Christ we might be made aware of the judgment that

he brings to us and of the kingdom that he has established among us they came everyone whose heart stirred him up and everyone whom his spirit made willing and they brought the Lord's offer we're going to sing hymn number 130 filled in and out and everything him and us and all and and him and us

L had Thank you.

Thank you.

[20 : 34] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[23 : 42] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be amongst you and remain with you always.

Amen. Amen.

[25 : 22] Amen. Amen.