

What is there left to say about Palm Sunday?

When Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem, the crowds cheered and welcomed Him into their religious capital...

But of course we know, only a few short days later, they were crying out for His blood.

When He entered, they threw **their** cloaks down on the ground – the equivalent of a red carpet, rolled out before Him.

But days later, they stripped **Him**... and they beat Him, and scourged Him with the lash.

On Palm Sunday, **they** climbed trees, and pulled down palm branches, and waved them, shouting “Hosanna”. But on Good Friday, they lifted **Him** up..., and they nailed him there, and left Him to die.... What is there left to say?

I remember when I was a kid, we learned that most kings ride into town on a valiant charger (no. not that kind. That’s better). The king comes riding in on a horse (a symbol of power and authority)... And as kids, we were taught that Jesus chose a donkey – something very un-kingly...

But the problem is, this was looking at the events through British eyes (and when it boils down to it, we're essentially British in our understanding of Kings and Kingdoms) – that might offend some of you, but it's true.

And it's important for us to remember, that the people who **were** there that day, were not British. And they were taking it all in, through Jewish eyes. And their greatest kings, did **not** ride horses – they rode donkeys... King David – the greatest King that Israel had ever had – , well He rode a donkey. And when it came time for his son, Solomon's coronation, so that all Israel would know that David had given his mark of approval to Solomon, he put Solomon onto His own donkey, to ride through the streets of Jerusalem... - A King, approved by David, and after David's own heart....

And now, here we have Jesus (The Son of David), coming in to Jerusalem, on a donkey... Let there be no mistake, Matthew told us,

⁴ This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

⁵ "Say to the daughter of Zion,
Look!!!!!!...., your **king** is coming to
you,

humble, and mounted on a donkey....,

They knew very well what it meant. They were putting out the red carpet for their new King. Yes, He was humble... Just as King David had been humble... - and much, much more so...

Jesus **did** come as their King. He **did** come as their Saviour... That's what "Hosanna" means, by the way. Hosanna means "O Save". Now, I don't know if they were saying it like we would say "God save the Queen", or as a cry to God, and a hope and expectation, that this new David-like king would save them, or maybe it was more likely, a hint of both.

But they knew 2 things: They knew that Jesus came into town as their king, **and** they knew that He came as their saviour...

I guess the thing that glares out at me, is they didn't **mind** that Jesus came as their King – They didn't **mind** that Jesus came as their saviour... In fact, they were quite excited about it all... Ultimately, what they couldn't handle, was that Jesus also came as their God...

You see, they only partly understood who Jesus was, and what He was doing... When they were asked, "Who is this bloke???"... Well... He's a prophet... Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee

Yes... He was a prophet, but He was much more than a prophet. He is a king, but He is much more than a king. – He's God.

And today, **most** people are happy for Jesus to be:

- some kind of religious leader ; or
- a wise sage; or
- a teacher and do-er of good; or
- a healer; or
- father Christmas, who gives good gifts...

But if Jesus Christ is God and King, well that's a whole different ball-park ... if Jesus Christ is God and King, then that means He has the right to make demands...

And Guess what – He does make demands. As Lord; God; King; He demands our total subjection to Him – He demands every part of our lives – Total submission.

And as soon as Jesus Christ entered the temple, we catch a glimpse of the kinds of demands He does make – **and** His authority to **make** those demands.

A few years ago, our family were blessed to be able to have a month in the US and Canada. I'd never been overseas before, so I was a bit unseasoned, as far as travelling goes.... Anyway, we knew it was expensive to get your money changed at the air port, so we organised that we'd just make withdrawals from ATM's when we

got to our destination, and we'd pay for most of our stuff on credit card anyway...

Anyway, regardless of this, when we got to the Brisbane airport and were waiting for our plane, the doubts started creeping in, and I thought, "Hmm... What if, for some reason, I do actually need some US currency, before we get to an ATM???" Maybe just to be safe, I'll just get a little bit now..."

So, we fronted up to the money changer's stand at the airport, and I looked at the exchange rates. I could see that they didn't match up. I think there was about a 12 c/\$ difference between the exchange rates for if I was buying US dollars or selling US dollars, but I thought "Well, they've got to make a profit some how. I don't expect them to change it for free, do I?"

So I changed about \$100, and received my currency... And I stepped back from the window and I started to count it... And it was nowhere near the exchange rate that they had up on the board... I'd been diddled.

And I was too late to warn him, but little Jake (Well, he was little back then), had presented them with about \$50 of his pocket money, and received about \$20 US in exchange...

And when I realised what had happened, I went up to the counter, and said, "This can't be right. There's

your exchange rates, and we only got this...” And Jake’s money had almost all disappeared...

And they pointed me to the fine print. There was a \$20 fee in addition to the margin on the rate. We’d been diddled (twice).

I don’t think I’ve ever felt so cheated... But more for Jake than for me.... If we’d known, we’d have done it in one exchange. But we didn’t know. We got caught out. And we felt cheated.... It put a real dampener on the start of our holiday....

I tell you that story because, imagine coming to church... It’s a really important Christian season. You’re really excited to be there, because it’s a special time. ... And imagine, you get into the foyer, and you’re told “Ah, you know you can’t use that sort of money here... But there’s the money changers...” And you go to the money changers – you’re planning on giving to God an offering of \$150... But after the money changers have taken their cut, you’re left with \$85....

Wouldn’t that be cruel????

Well, that’s just what it was like when Jesus went to the Temple, the week before Passover...

Money changers were doing their thing. Merchants were doing theirs. Everyone was supposed to buy a sacrifice, and those who provided the appropriate animals (such as doves), had set up shop – right there in the temple – and they were making **their** profits – all at the expense of those who just wanted to honour God.

And Jesus would **not** stand for it.

And so today, we get to see Jesus from 2 different perspectives.

- Gentle, humble, welcomed; but then
- Angry; judging; uncompromising; ... He drove out all who sold and bought in the temple

I don't think I've ever noticed that before. It wasn't only the money changers he chased out of the temple. It wasn't only the dealers who **sold** the sacrifices he chased away...

He drove out **all** who traded – those who sold, **and** those who **bought** in the temple....

It wasn't only those who were cheating – it was all those, who accepted and participated in the commercialisation of God's temple. He said, "**It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers.**"

Now...

What sort of picture do you have of Jesus???... Gentle and Humble???

Or Angry; Judging; determined; uncompromising....???

How do you picture Jesus? How should we picture Jesus? What is God really like?

Some people picture Jesus as this gentle, humble man, and that's it...

Some people picture God as angry and judging...

And until you know Jesus Christ as **both** of these, then you don't **really** know Jesus....

It was Jesus Christ who welcomed the tax collectors and the prostitutes, demonstrating His grace and mercy, and calling them to live as God's children...

And it was this same Jesus Christ, who stood against those who claimed to be children of God, but who lived as children of the devil...

Jesus Christ is the one who saves. He is the one who welcomes... But He is also the one who judges, and is uncompromising in His judgment....

In Revelation 19, we find a picture of Jesus, as He will be on His **second** visit to planet Earth. The first time

He came as saviour, and He is still saving today. But when He comes, next time he'll be coming as judge. The first time, He came on His donkey. Next time, He'll come on His war horse.

Revelation 19:

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and look!, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

I don't want to be on the wrong side of that king.

At last count, there are 196 countries in the world...
But in God's eyes, there are 2 kingdoms. There is the
Kingdom of this world, and there is the Kingdom of
God.

The question is, "Which Kingdom are you a citizen of?"
"To which king, have you given your allegiance?"
"Is Jesus Christ **your** king?" Do you belong to the
Kingdom of God?
Or do you belong to the Kingdom of this world?

It never fails to astonish me, how God chooses those
who are so insignificant. He chooses the weak. He
chooses the poor. He chooses the humble and the
lowly...

Verse 14 And the blind and the lame came to him
in the temple, and he healed them. **15** But when
the chief priests and the scribes saw the
wonderful things that he did, and the children
crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of
David!" they were indignant, **16** and they said to
him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And
Jesus said to them, "**Yes; have you never read,**
" 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing
babies
you have prepared praise'?"

To what Kingdom do you belong? To which King have you given allegiance?

You're never too young. You're never too weak.
You're never too sick or too old. To praise God as **your** king.

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you.
You are the King of Kings. You are the Lord of Lords.
We praise you that you came, as you are. Gentle and Humble.
We praise you that, when you return, you will come as you are:
Judging; determined; uncompromising.

Lord, we praise you for your grace and mercy.
We praise you, that although we do not deserve it – Although we are weak, and in the eyes of the world, insignificant...
We praise you that you have drawn us to your Kingdom.
We praise you that, through the shedding of your blood on the cross,
We may enter, as citizens of your kingdom. – pure; holy; loved...

And Lord, we pray for Your return.
Come Lord Jesus Christ,
Claim your throne.

In the name of Christ, Amen.