

# SUNDAY 5<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2020 WHITSTABLE BAPTIST CHURCH'S 'VIRTUAL' SERVICE

## WELCOME (Rev Paul Wilson) [Video]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7SKU0VZwpw>

**Introit by our choral Group:** I watch the sunrise – Click [here](#) to listen

1. I watch the sunrise lighting the sky casting the shadows near.  
And on this morning, bright though it be, I feel those shadows near me.

2. I'll watch the sunlight shine through the clouds, warming the earth below.  
And in the mid-day, life seems to say: I feel Your brightness near me.  
Chorus: But You are always close to me, following all my ways.  
May I be always near You, following all your ways, Lord.

3. I watch the sunset fading away, lighting the clouds with sleep.  
And as the evening closes its eyes, I feel Your presence near me

4. I watch the moonlight guarding the night, waiting till morning comes.  
The air is silent, earth is at rest; only Your peace is near me.  
Chorus: Yes, You are always close to me, following all my ways.  
May I be always close to You, following all Your ways, Lord.

Lyrics: John Glynn  
Music: Colin Murphy

## BIBLE VERSES FROM PSALM 24

<sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>8</sup> Who is this King of glory?  
The LORD strong and mighty,  
the LORD mighty in battle.

<sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, you gates;  
lift them up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>10</sup> Who is he, this King of glory?  
The LORD Almighty—  
he is the King of glory.

## A Prayer for God to be Glorified (Adapted from a recent YouVersion Prayer)

Dear God,

It's Your Name that is honoured from generation to generation. You alone are worthy of all glory and praise.

And You are not shocked by the state of the world right now. Your ways are not and You are not at a loss about what to do.

Nothing is impossible for You.

So today, we are proclaiming that You will be glorified through this current crisis. That Your name will be known and praised throughout the earth.

Pierce the darkness with Your light. Shine brighter than the fear of death, economic ruin, or a long quarantine.

When we look back on this moment in history, may we be filled with joy as we remember Your faithfulness and the revival, hope, and peace that came out of this difficult season.

Continue to draw this hurting world back to You.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

**A quote attributed to CS Lewis doing the rounds on social media last week (& one which reflects Lewis's 'Screwtape Letters' & his own experience of World War II ):**

*Satan "I will cause anxiety, fear and panic. I will shut down schools, places of worship and sports events. I will cause economic turmoil."*

*Jesus "I will bring together neighbours, restore the family unit, I will bring dinner back to the kitchen table. I will help people slow down their lives and appreciate what really matters. I will teach my children to rely on me and not the world. I will teach my children to trust me and not their money and material resources."*

**This reflects on the way that Jesus can turn the worst evil that Satan can throw at us into a renewed way of living.**

*Today on Palm Sunday we recall how, in this striking event, Jesus challenged current ways of thinking at that time, faced down His enemies, revealed the true servant nature of the coming Messianic King & released praise & worship! We join with the exuberance of the crowds now:*

**SONG:** Make way, make way

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alCQ7fb0hEA>

**'DAN THE DONKEY'** video clip

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00wg4xt>

**SONG:** Hosanna, hosanna

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1X-VDCMyAc>

Hosanna, Hosanna  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Hosanna, Hosanna,  
Hosanna in the highest!

Lord we lift up Your name  
with hearts full of praise  
Be exalted oh Lord my God!  
Hosanna in the highest!

Glory, Glory  
Glory to the King of Kings!  
Glory, Glory,  
Glory to the King of Kings!

### **FAMILY PRAYERS (RevPW) [Video]**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZvobe5ZuDw>

**HYMN:** Hosanna, loud Hosanna

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=nGRakE8KnFU>

### **A Reflection from Alison Oliver**

**There's a lot going on when Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.** One of the things that amazes me is how he heads right into the belly of the beast.

**Jesus knows what he's getting into.** From the episode in the Garden of Gethsemane we also know that he's not exactly thrilled about it. There's a deep pain there.

But, his face is set like flint towards Jerusalem. There is no waver, there is no detour.

And, Jesus isn't just heading towards those who are plotting his death. I suppose one could easily imagine him valiantly and bravely staring down the forces of darkness.

But, he's not just coming to reckon with Pilate and the Sanhedrin. Jesus is also going to Jerusalem to disappoint his followers.

Jerusalem is an occupied city, bent over backwards by the Romans. There is constant threat to life, liberty, and the religious and spiritual ideals which had been kindled in God's people since the days of Abraham.

The people of Jerusalem weren't just hungry for freedom and victory. They ached for it. Yearned for it.

**And, when the Messiah walked into Jerusalem that day riding on a donkey the people knew this was big. They just didn't know what "big thing" Jesus had in mind.**

The palm branch and the cry of "hosanna" had been associated with the Feast of Tabernacles for centuries, but ever since the Macabbean revolt in the 160's BCE they were also the penultimate symbols of nationalistic pride. They were reminders that God could do miraculous and amazing things and could conjure a victory from the deep recesses of oppression.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem the crowds didn't sing their hosannas and wave their palm branches because they were so incredibly captivated by Jesus' message of love and grace. For them, the Messiah was coming to raise up an army, and with the help of God, Rome would be sent running with their pagan tales between their legs.

You see, Jesus wasn't just staring down his professed enemies. He was also coming to Jerusalem to disappoint his devotees in colossal fashion.

They were ready for an uprising and a military/ political victory.

Jesus, on the other hand, was ready to take up his cross. And die.

**And into Jerusalem, and to the cross he went.**

As I said before, there's a lot going on when Jesus enters the Holy City. Things of great theological, soteriological [salvation-centred], and Christological significance.

But, what we also have is an icon of Christ moving towards conflict, pain, and the reality that he would end up being a great disappointment to others who had laid so many expectations upon him.

He went anyway.

**Palm Sunday is just a microcosm of Jesus ministry:** the brief attention of a multitude, which quickly leads to the rejection of the same multitude.

To brave that takes a huge heart. To brave that and still be in love with those who reject him—and be willing to die for them?...Well, that's just amazing.

**Five days after Jesus risked it all and entered Jerusalem he was nailed to a cross in brutal and humiliating fashion.** If the story of Jesus ended there, we'd say that he was an absolute failure. Worthless.

Oh...he had so much potential...he could have done so many things and changed the world...but he had to go and be...a great disappointment.

**But, Jesus shows us that disappointment doesn't have to have the last word.** In fact, disappointment can walk out of a tomb and shatter the present powers of this world. Jesus is enough. With Him we are enough.

**SONG:** All I once held dear

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=oxpPla-BskY>

**BIBLE READING: John 12 verses 12-19 (Douglas Wilson) [Video]**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0ZFGLSLnZw>

<sup>12</sup>The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>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!"

<sup>14</sup>Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

<sup>15</sup>"Do not be afraid, Daughter of Zion;  
see, your king is coming,  
seated on a donkey's colt."

<sup>16</sup>At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

<sup>17</sup>Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. <sup>18</sup>Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. <sup>19</sup>So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

**SONG:** Lift up your heads to the coming King

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-MLv-ml7E0>

**TALK (Bible teaching in note form PW)**

**Facing the totally unexpected is now a reality for us just as it was for the disciples as they journeyed through the days of the first Holy Week.** It began with the highly surprising events of what we now

know as 'Palm Sunday'. None of them had guessed that this remarkable & audacious entry into Jerusalem was just around the corner & none of them had absorbed what Jesus had clearly said would lie ahead beyond it.

See Luke 18 (headed up in the NIV with the title 'Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time'):

**31 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. 32 He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; 33 they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again."**

**The disciples failed to take this on board & were 'all at sea'. But the unfolding drama did not come as a surprise to Jesus** for it was all part of a much bigger picture', of a much grander purpose than His disciples could ever have imagined. A redemptive plan originating in the heart of God that would necessitate His Son taking human flesh & offering up His life to death on a cruel cross. Embracing all of this for us!

**We mark today an unveiling of the Lord that was a remarkably positive interlude.** This moment of uncontainable praise, this very public disclosure of His majestic yet humble Messiahship, gives a foretaste of His fulfilment of OT prophecies & of His ultimate triumph over His enemies. The crowds quickly alighted on key verses from Psalm 118 (i.e. vs25&26). Jesus' mastery of the situation is so evident & is further revealed when He enters the Temple & deals so decisively with the money-lenders & merchants.

**These tremendously memorable incidents constitute both a turning point & a precursor which –**

- BRINGS ESSENTIAL THINGS REGARDING JESUS' MISSION INTO FOCUS & CONCENTRATES MINDS
- SHAKES FOUNDATIONS
- CHALLENGES VESTED INTERESTS
- CONSTITUTES A CONSPICUOUS & IRREPRESSIBLE VINDICATION OF JESUS
- DECLARES GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER UNFOLDING EVENTS
- MOVES JESUS' EARTHLY MINISTRY INTO A NEW & CLOSING PHASE

**There are some parallels here with our experience just now as we live through this period of crisis & commentators are already saying that things will never be the same again!** A fresh movement of God's Spirit is stirring in our land. Moreover, some are remarking that our churches will never be the same again!

**This striking Palm Sunday episode took everyone by surprise. Ushering in a whole new situation, not least for the disciples.** They cannot turn back the clock; Jesus has thrown down the gauntlet. He has crossed the Rubicon. He has entirely embraced the will of his Father & the cost of our salvation & is now anticipating the final showdown with the religious & political authorities. Palm Sunday inexorably paves the way to the Cross. Bitter rejection cruel abuse & agonising death are a stone's throw away! Whilst the disciples are at a loss to work out what is going on, the people express their enormous hopes now that Jesus is on the scene.

**This exuberant occasion of unrestrainable praise was a gift of glory, a bursting forth of messianic hopes & pent-up admiration for Jesus** before the terrible suffering ahead. As John's Gospel stresses, it was the raising of Lazarus that brought matters to a head & led to this outpouring of delight & expectation on the part of the mingling crowds – excited masses flowing into Jerusalem for festival time & inquisitive throngs emerging from Jerusalem to see this much-talked-about Jesus who had just performed an astounding miracle.

**Today** we are living with totally unexpected events. However harrowing the news of this pandemic peaking may be, there are undoubtedly surprisingly positive twists to this current lock-down. We have the opportunity to reappraise so much in company of the Saviour who was completely submitted to & fully in tune with God's purposes. We refocus on the things that really matter. In a time when everything is being shaken, we anchor our hearts in God alone, taking fresh delight in His salvation & in Jesus' promised return. In doing so, our spontaneous praise erupts & our shouts of 'Hosanna' rise above the dark clouds of despair!

**HYMN:** Ride on ride on in majesty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo5pfl6z6IA>

**Benediction** (from Romans)

**15:5-6,13** - May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..[And] May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

**16v22** – To the only wise God be glory for ever through Jesus Christ! Amen