

Speaking to the soul



Reflection from Palm Sunday

Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Jesus was in the centre of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting: “Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings

on the one who comes in the name of the LORD! Praise God in highest heaven!” Matthew 21:8-

At the beginning of Matthew’s Gospel, we read about the Magi. They were important people from the East who visited Jesus after seeing a star, which showed them that a king had been born. At the time, their belief couldn’t have seemed further from the truth. Born to poor parents in a cattle shed, nothing suggested that Jesus was a king. But now, towards the end of his life, we see him being greeted as royalty. Spreading garments on the road and cutting down tree branches was the way they would welcome a king. The crowd was acknowledging that Jesus stood in the line of King David. But he was no ordinary king. Jesus surprised people throughout his ministry, and on this important day he shocked them even more by riding on the least appropriate animal imaginable – a donkey!

Palm Sunday is consistent with the whole of Jesus’ ministry. He never chose to associate with powerful or important people. He was content to spend his time with the dregs of society, the people whom others overlooked. He welcomed children, went to parties with tax collectors and prostitutes, touched people who had leprosy, spotted deep faith in non-Jewish people and welcomed women in a society where they were second-class citizens. Everything about Jesus’ ministry was a shock to respectable and religious people, so nobody should have been surprised on Palm Sunday. He went to Jerusalem not to fit in with the expectations of the religious establishment, but to show that the doors of the kingdom were thrown open to all who would come to him in faith, however broken and despised they might be.

Palm Sunday set the tone for this remarkable week and one which continues to challenge us as we live for God today.

QUESTION

How would you have reacted if you had been on the Mount of Olives on that first Palm Sunday?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, I invite you to be the king of my life today. Thank you that you have welcomed me into your kingdom. Amen

Photograph - After Palm Sunday, The Royal Chapel, Hampton Court Palace

