

The Way x15. Sunday 14 April 2019.

Jesus makes a Way to Jerusalem.

READ: John 12: 12 - 19. The Triumphal Entry.

JESUS declared himself to be the Way (to the Father *John 14: 6*). *Acts 9: 2* His followers are described as those who ***belonged to the Way***.

We seek the Way of Jesus – to see how he lived his life and won his battles.
LENT journey towards the suffering of Easter has begun and we have in our talks been following follow Jesus on the Way of obedience. I have already said that **if we want to find the Way through** then according to the teaching of scripture we need to have the same attitude as Jesus – *Philippians 2 v8* ***“he was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death – his death on the cross”***.
(see also Hebrews 5: 7 -9)

Last Week we considered how Jesus showed his power by raising Lazarus from the dead. This happened at Bethany where the family of Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. **Read v17, 18**. The people who had witnessed Jesus do this to Lazarus had stuck with him like glue – believing that Jesus must be the Messiah that the Jews waited for.

It was they who spread the word to those attending the Passover Festival in Jerusalem that Jesus intended making an appearance and **v12** they were ready and waiting for Jesus when he appeared. (Remember they wanted a King to overthrow the Romans).

We know from details recorded in the other Gospels – the Synoptics that Jesus had made preparations to arrive in Jerusalem riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (*Matt 21: 1 – 11; Mark 11: 1 – 11 and Luke 19: 28 – 40*)

This day in a way was stage managed by Jesus and a statement about who he was and direct challenge to the Jewish religious leaders and especially the Pharisees. **V19 The Pharisees then said to one another, “You see, we are not succeeding at all! Look the whole world is following him!”**.

JESUS chose to ride into Jerusalem in the way that he did – on a lowly donkey’s colt and not on a mighty charger of a war horse. And he did this because he was making a statement to the people who believed the Prophet ***Zechariah 9:9, 10 Rejoice, rejoice, people of Zion! Shout for joy, you people from Jerusalem! Look your King is coming to you! He comes triumphant and victorious but humble and riding on a donkey – on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will remove the war chariots from Israel and take the horses from Jerusalem; the bows used in battle will be destroyed. Your King will make peace among the nations...he will rule from sea to sea, from the River Euphrates to the ends of the earth.*** (520-518BC)

So, the time came for Jesus to publicly challenge the religious powers that oppressed the people of Israel. Jesus is much more subversive than many realise who just want to make him into a person of sentiment and all that is nice. Many who want to keep Jesus as a baby born in a stable find it hard to see him as the One, that he really is – God with skin on challenging oppression and injustice.

As we enter this next week leading up to Good Friday we see the struggles Jesus' faced between being the sort of Saviour people wanted namely a warring political Saviour and the Saviour he needed to be to truly set people free. We also see the increasing anger against Jesus on behalf of the Pharisees because of his popularity with the people.

On the way to Jerusalem the people treated Jesus as royalty - spreading out their cloaks and cutting palm branches to throw before him. They called out loudly, ***Hosanna – praise God, save the people now! God bless him who comes in the name of the LORD. God bless the King of Israel. (Psalm 118: 25. 26)***

Verse 16 – We see that the Disciples were confused and didn't understand Jesus' actions on this day. Only later, after his resurrection and ascension did they reflect and understand what he was doing on this day.

Jesus' true course, the true Way was to be utterly obedient to the plan that Godhead had decided. That plan included a sacrificial death upon the cross for the whole world.

Jesus calls us to follow him and listen to his voice. As surely as Jesus rose from the dead he is still alive and we too can hear him now and not just worship him but also know him as friend.

There are things for us to learn from Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Important things for Ashley and the rest of us to learn about how Jesus went about things.

- Jesus did challenge the oppressive powers of the world and those people that did not live just and right lives. Even if this meant trouble for him.
- But Jesus did this with humility and simple dignity. He did not seek celebrity or popularity from the crowd.
- Even when he was afraid he did the right thing. He didn't let other people control his actions but followed the voice of his Father God.
- Jesus loved the people and wanted the best for them – to win them back for God.

Unique relationship of Jesus within the Trinity and so at Jesus' own baptism in the River Jordan God the Father's voice is heard:

you are my beloved son with whom I am pleased. And the Spirit alights upon Jesus.

The Divider makes us doubt our own relationship with God: ***If you are God's Son (if you are in relationship with the Father).*** Listen to God's voice.