

A song to sing or to read: Sing this to Darwall (TiS 371)

Hosanna to the Lord, who rides on humble steed
Rejoice our king is come, now follow where he leads.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again, I say rejoice!

Blest be the king of God, who comes in God's own name
He rules with peace; the earth shall never be the same.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again, I say rejoice!

The earth itself shall sing; the stones break forth in song
For Christ who fears not death, does triumph over wrong.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again, I say rejoice!

Hosanna to the King with branches waving high
He sheds the cloak of glory, riding on to die.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice! Rejoice, again, I say rejoice!

*Copyright: Lyrics by permission Heather Prince Doss (Verses 2017)
Charles Wesley 1744 (Refrain)
Music by John Darwall 1770*



Closing Prayer

Dear Lord
You have been present with us this in special time we have with you.
We celebrate your arrival, your continuing promise.
We are refreshed and eager to serve in so many little ways.
Knowing this, we will provide comfort and belonging to those who
need both at this time.
We now go forth in celebration for you. Your way is before us.
As we face another week, let us celebrate the king.
Amen



Church in a Bag 5 April 2020 Palm Sunday

Dubbo Uniting Church



A Gathering Prayer

As we gather together
bring your palms and branches your shouts and praise.
Hosanna to the Son of
David!
Hosanna to the King of
kings!
Let us journey to
Jerusalem
to worship the king who
came to save us.

Amen



A Prayer of Preparation

Compassionate God, greet us with your grace this day, for we need you. We cannot save ourselves and though we may be frantic with activity, our efforts do not bring us contented peace. Today let us be quiet enough to hear your voice. Today let us be still enough to feel your touch. Help us to find that place where we can receive as well as give, wait as well as act, and listen as well as speak. Our whole world needs your peace. Let us come before you and learn your ways, laying down what restricts us from feeding the hungry, and those needing your presence in their life. Come to us now, through Jesus Christ.

Amen



First Reading: Psalm 118:1-2,19-29

Its origins lie in the Passover celebrations in which Jesus was arriving to share in. Some of its words are quoted in Matthew's Gospel. And its mood can uplift our worship today.

Passover was (is) a national religious festival commemorating the deliverance of Israel from slavery and included the Passover meal at home and celebrations in the Temple. But it also had political overtones for Jewish people living under Roman occupation. Each year's festival carried the hope that this Passover would mark a new beginning. Psalms were sung as the arriving pilgrims glimpsed the Temple from the hills surrounding Jerusalem, including Psalm 118. Now read the psalm boldly, with loud voice. If you are sharing, read alternate verses.

Reflection: The Rejected Stone

Jesus quoted the words of the Psalmist: "The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner..." (Psalm 118:22). Later Simon Peter would quote these words to the rulers and the elders in testimony concerning the good news of Christ (Acts 4:11). Then he would cite those words again in his epistles (1 Peter 2:7).



There was a legend that was well known in New Testament times, that in the building of the temple of Solomon most of the stones were of the same size and shape. One stone arrived, however, that was different from the others. The builders took one look at it and said, "This will not do," and sent it rolling down into the valley of Kedron below. The years passed and the great temple was nearing completion, and the builders sent a message to the stonecutters to send the chief cornerstone that the structure might be complete. The cutters replied that they had sent the stone years before. Then someone remembered the stone that was different than all the rest that somehow did not seem to belong. They realized that they had

thrown away the cornerstone. They hurried into the valley to retrieve it. Finally, under vines and debris they recovered it and with great effort rolled it up the hill and put it in place so that the great temple would be complete. The stone that had been rejected had become the chief cornerstone. Jesus, who had been rejected now reigns at the right hand of the Father. From rejection to rejoicing.

Second Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

Reflection: Good news – the Messiah has come!

The people acclaim him. Bad news – they see somebody else. They wanted a conquering monarch, a military leader, not a peacemaker riding on a donkey, on the way to a cross. Expectations can distort vision, so for many – those who want quick solutions rather than the revolution of the heart – Jesus is a disappointment. In a culture that worships power, celebrity and heroes, Jesus is seen as a failure. Yet power declines, celebrity fades, heroes dwindle. What endures? What sustains? In a world of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, who will we follow?

Surprising and inevitable. Palm Sunday and the events of Holy Week are both surprising and inevitable. The truth is that we are not completely sure what to make of Palm Sunday. After forty days of Lenten travel that have often focussed on serious and sometimes dark subjects, suddenly we arrive at a day that seems at first blush to be surprisingly cheery. The Palm Sunday parade has colour and spectacle, cheering and singing, festive voices and joyful exuberance. This seems like a happy day. Yet it would be completely appropriate if you were to ask, "What in the world is this day doing here given how close we are now to the cross!?" Is Palm Sunday a bright spot in the midst of the otherwise darker hues of Lent? Are we, for just a little while this morning, supposed to forget about all things dreary so that we can cry out some full-throated "Hosannas!?" Or is there also a sadness to this day that we must bear in mind?

