

Message notes for Palm Sunday 20.3.2016

How are you in crowds?

The crowds we like (Take That at Wembley! ☺) and the less than friendly crowds (☹ last minute desperation on Christmas Eve!)

The Crowd mentality from Donald Trump rallies, to riots in Turkey.

Football stadiums and political rallies. All different sorts of crowds. Crowds can turn on you. Cheering turns to jeering. That was Jesus' experience on Palm Sunday.

In every crowd, there's a mixture of people. In every gathered group of people, we will have the cheerers and the jeerers. Even here today. All way through scripture cheerers and jeerers...

e.g. man born blind healed by Jesus, some amazed (cheerers) and many questioned and criticised. (Jeerers). Pentecost – some onlookers thought it was a miraculous event (cheerers) others thought the disciples were drunk with wine (jeerers)

Experiment on what the power of the mob can do. The mob mentality and how easily we may be swayed to agree to things we don't usually.

Palm Sunday Jesus surrounded by cheering but that stops as Jesus begins to focus his preaching on the expectation to commitment. Rich young ruler encouraged to sell everything and follow Jesus. A call to commitment he could not complete. Message had been about grace, now about call to complete commitment. No miracles done by Jesus after he enters Jerusalem.

- Fig tree parable: Jesus withers the fig tree as it produces no fruit. Jesus demands fruitful committed lives
- A Parable is told: Who is more committed? The son who says, "I will work" and then does not or the son who says, "I will not work," repents, and gets the work done? It is the son who does the work.
- The greatest commandment is given: Love God and Love your neighbour; again, a call to commitment.
- His teachings, "be watchful for we do not the day or hour of his return," is also here. After the triumphal entry, everywhere Jesus asks for commitment and devotion from the people and what he heard in response he did not like.
- **All about commitment.**

Jesus reminds people they are included in God's plan and worth loving. He goes to the temple drives out the moneychangers and invites IN the sick and the lame and those who had not been included before.

Jesus opens up church to everyone ☺

He points everyone to the cross and what is ahead. He begins to talk more and more about sacrifice. The message of Easter isn't easy. It is not nice, it is hard, it is messy and difficult. It is about sacrifice. Is it really necessary we think?

Isn't that what we so often say to God? Yes, Lord, I heard that talk about sacrifice but I didn't really think that you meant it. The cross says emphatically that he did mean it.

And we stand at the bottom of the hill looking up to the Cross of Christ and all that it means. And for us it means, commitment, a grace filled church where all are welcomed and an ultimate sacrifice.

Have you said your yes to the Jesus who gave His all for you? Have you given Him your donkey and your yes? We walk the road to Easter with him. Amen.