

Palm Sunday

This year we are invited to read Matthews account of the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem that we know as Palm Sunday. So please read Matthew 21 1-11 if you can.

One thing has always made me wonder – why did the crowd go ahead of Jesus? My experience of crowds is that they want to get near to the action they do not want to go ahead. However, when the Olympics came to the UK the cycle race took place near to where we lived, indeed we saw Walton on Thames Methodist Church on the TV as they raced by. People did line the route for a fleeting glance of the rider's, so I suppose people went ahead to get a fleeting glance of Jesus. But that worries me because a fleeting glance is just that. So, when we wonder why days later the crowd turned on Jesus maybe the reality is, they didn't turn because they had never really known Jesus so fleeting was the view they got.

I'm a bit worried that the same may be true for some people today. We rush in and out of church and have a fleeting glance at God before disappearing back into the world and forgetting about God until next Sunday. That was fine whilst we were worshipping Sunday by Sunday as long as the contact continued. Now we are in a different place confined to our home or to our workplace if we are allowed to go out. There is no opportunity to get to our church building.

Here's the question that thought brings to mind – which part of the crowd are we in? Are we in the bit surrounding Jesus or are we way up the road waiting for a fleeting glance that may or may not come? It seems to me that the purpose of Palm Sunday is not to promote Jesus after all that had already taken place. The news of his miracles and teaching had spread far and wide it was already well known. No this was more about asking a question of the crowd "where do you stand".

As we approach Holy week as we look to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday perhaps this is a good time to ask ourselves the same question "where do I stand?" Perhaps you might want to pause for a moment reread the whole of Matthews account and ask yourself where I would have been in the events had I been there. Try it now and then come back here.

If you were among those catching a fleeting glance perhaps this is the time to get closer to the action to get closer to God. This Holy week I invite you to join in reading the Bible and reflecting on the events described as we prepare for Christ's resurrection

Monday – Isaiah 42: 1-9

Tuesday – Isaiah 49: 1-7

Wednesday - Isaiah 50: 4-9a

Thursday – 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26

Friday – Isaiah 52: 13 – 53:12

Saturday – John 19: 38-42

If you saw yourself at the centre, then you too have a role this Easter. The bike race I mentioned earlier was on a hot day and Walton on Thames Methodist Church opened their doors and handed out water to the spectators. It was for me a reminder that God offers all the living water of Jesus. At this time of fear and worry people are looking for answers looking for support. As God's people we need to ask ourselves how we can offer hope, how we can be living water. Many are doing it already in practical ways, buying food for a neighbour, making a call to say how are you and of course we give thanks for those designated key workers in our hospitals and surgeries, shops, manufacturing,

delivering goods, and of course the care workers. If you see any of them make sure you say thank you to them for their giving for our benefit. Perhaps those of us who are fit able and not in, or living with someone in, the critical category might think about what we might do to help our community. May we seek out Christ in the middle of this unrest and help others to find comfort in God.

May the peace of the Lord be always with you

Revd Nick