

Palm Sunday

~ Matthew 21:1-11 ~ Mark 1:1-11 ~ Luke 19: 28-39 ~ John 12: 12-15

Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

Matthew quotes Zechariah 9:9-10 "Behold, your king comes to you, meek and riding on an ass." A king would have entered a city either riding a donkey or a warhorse. Jesus is riding on a donkey. Why? Because Jesus is coming to "proclaim peace to the nations" not to conquer them in battle. In Hebrew, *Shalom* is translated as "peace." But *Shalom* is not an absence of conflict. *Shalom* means "wholeness, completeness." Scripture is full of the phrase, "*Shalom* be with you." God desires us to be whole and complete, not just live without conflict.

- *Where are your missing pieces? How can you lean into God to help make you whole?*
- *How are you bringing Shalom/wholeness into your family, friends, and community?*
- *Spend some time today asking Him to help you become like His donkey... committed, hardworking and dedicated to your relationship with Him!!*

The people receive Him as a king and join together to sing, "Hosanna" at His arrival.

Psalms 118:26-27 "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest." The Psalm continues "We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God and has given us light. Bind the sacrifice to the horns of the altar with cords." While the Psalm tells of sacrificing while receiving the king and rejoicing at his arrival, Jesus intends to become the sacrifice Himself for humankind.

- *How does Jesus enter your Holy week? On a donkey (hard working, determination, dedication towards work and devotion) with a front seat to your faith commitment?*
- *Do you make Him the real King of your life? Or is He just a celebrity who you admire and enjoy? Do you accept his message as long as it's not too difficult?*

The people lay down their cloaks on the ground and cut palm branches to welcome Him into Jerusalem.

Palms are very significant in Scripture and the ancient and modern history of the Jewish people. They are a symbol of peace, freedom, righteousness, and justice.

Palms in Scripture:

- **Peace and Freedom:** 1 Maccabees 13:51: “the Jews entered the citadel with shouts of praise, the waving of palm branches, the playing of harps and cymbals and lyres, and the singing of hymns and canticles, because a great enemy of Israel had been crushed.” After defeating the Greeks, Judah Maccabee enters into Jerusalem and proceeds to the Temple. He cleanses the Temple and reestablishes the presence of God. This event is celebrated as Hannukah, where the oil to re-sanctify the Temple miraculously lasted 8 nights, when there was only enough oil for one night.
- **Righteousness:** Psalm 92:13: “The just shall flourish like the palm tree, shall grow like the cedar of Lebanon.” There are different types of righteousness. Some are like the cedar, growing tall and straight, with an eye towards heaven and always reaching towards God. Some are like the palm, strong and straight, and also producing fruit that will give life to those around them.

- o *God calls all of us to righteousness. How is He calling you to grow in righteousness?*

- **Justice:** Judges 4: 4-5: “At that time the prophet Deborah, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under Deborah’s palm tree, between Ramah and Bethel in the mountain region of Ephraim, where the Israelites came up to her for judgment.” At a time when the kings were not just, God raised a series of “judges” to bring His wisdom to His people. Deborah is one of seven prophetesses of the Old Testament.

Palms in post-biblical Judaism:

- During the Second Jewish Revolt against the Romans (132-135AD), the Jews in Israel minted their own coins as a statement of sovereignty. Images on the coins include palm branches.
- Modern Israeli coins include images of palm branches.
- Palms are included in other biblical celebrations, such as Sukkot, the festival of the fall harvest (“Festival of Booths”).

Today’s Mission: Place palms or greenery at your front door and/or your mailbox.... Start preparing