***Wind IN THE WILDERNESS***

**Lenten Worship Series – Palm Sunday**

***A Taste of the Good Life – Zechariah***

**April 10, 2022**

|  |
| --- |
| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**S  Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. Sermon manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim. |

***Jesus Isn’t Tame***

**Call to Worship:**

We know that Jesus is good, just, and full of grace. But Jesus was hardly predictable. He was never *just* fully human. He was also fully divine. Jesus was ever present and part of the triune God. He turned over tables in worship places; he challenged the status quo; he healed on days he wasn’t supposed to; and turned his back on the religious elite by choosing to eat with those whom the religious leaders rejected. This Jesus was far from predictable. He was good, but he wasn’t safe. He wasn’t tame.

Jesus was and is good. He is just, merciful, and gracious. He healed the sick and touched those whom society rejected. Jesus ate with outcasts and washed the feet of the lowest of society. He showed us a better way through his life and actions. Looking at the entry into Jerusalem is a good way to take a good long look at what we want Jesus to be and to study who Jesus really was.

*“Hosanna to the Son of David!”*

*“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”*

Matthew 21:9 (NIV)

(*Wind in the Wilderness*, pp. 71, 77)

[*Children enter sanctuary waving palm branches.*]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Song – Hosanna, Loud Hosanna**  [*words below are not in S.A. Song Book*] | TB-127 – Ellacombe | HTD1-T9 (3 vs. – band ending) |
| 1) Hosanna, loud Hosanna, the little children sang,  Through pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang.  To Jesus, who had blessed them close folded to his breast,  The children sang their praises, the simplest and the best. | | |
| 2) From Olivet they followed ‘mid an exultant crowd,  The victor palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud.  The Lord of earth and heaven rode on in lowly state,  Nor scorned that little children should on his bidding wait. | | |
| 3) “Hosanna in the highest!” that ancient song we sing,  For Christ is our Redeemer, the Lord of heaven our King.  O may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice,  And in his blissful presence eternally rejoice!  *--Jennette Threlfall (1821-1880)* | | |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **HC#97/SOS#29 – Blessed Be the Name of the Lord** | HC-97  SOS-29 | HCD8-T17 |
| **SB#73/HC#141/SOS#28 – All hail the power** | TB-306 – Coronation  HC-141  SOS-28 | HTD5-T5 (4 vs.)  HCD13-T11 |
| **HC#158 – Blessed Be Your Name** | HC-158 | HCD14-T18 |
| **HC#188 – Save Now** | HC-188 | HCD17-T18 |
| **SB#391/HC#171 – Stand up and bless the Lord** | TB-149 – Falcon Street  HC-171 | HTD3-T12 (3 vs.)  HCD16-T11 |
| **HC#195 – Hear Our Praises** | HC-195 | HCD18-T15 |
| **HC#225 – Hosanna (Praise Is Rising)** | HC-225 | HCD21-T15 |
| **SB#56/HC#251 – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty** | TB-735 – Lobe den Herren  HC-251 | HTD4-T11 (4 vs.)  HCD24-T11 |
| **SB#225 – Jesus comes! Let all adore Him!** | TB-392 – Ottawa | HTD9-T14 (4 vs.) |

|  |
| --- |
| **Children’s Moment** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Drama – Criminal Activity** |

***Overturning Expectations***

**Responsive Reading:**

**Leader:** In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a very specific animal. Well, it’s really two animals; a donkey and a colt. Matthew makes clear that these animals represent the messianic fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures. Zechariah 9:9 associates the king who will come with both the donkey and the colt:

**All:** *See, your king comes to you,  
     righteous and victorious,  
lowly and riding on a donkey,  
     on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Zechariah 9:9 (NIV)

**Leader:** It’s important to recognize that Jesus specifically instructed his disciples to bring these animals to him for the purpose of his entry into Jerusalem:

**Men: *2****“Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.****3****If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”*

Matthew 21:2-3 (NIV)

**Leader:** All four Gospels have stories of crowds that gathered around Jesus as he entered Jerusalem in fulfillment of this prophecy from Zechariah. Matthew focuses on the energy surrounding Jesus’ entry:

**Women: *8****A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.****9****The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,*

**ALL:** *“Hosanna to the Son of David!”*

*“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”*

*“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”*

Matthew 21:8-9 (NIV)

**Leader:** When the palm-waving crowd shouted “Hosanna!” or “save please,” they echoed Psalm 118:25-26:

**All:** ***25*** *Lord, save us!  
     Lord, grant us success!*

***26****Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
     From the house of the Lord we bless you.*

Psalm 118:25-26 (NIV)

**Leader:** Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey and journeys through the crowds from the city gates directly to the Temple. This is what the people expected. What they didn’t expect is what happened when he got there.

**Men:** ***12****Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.****13****“It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’”*

**Leader:** The crowdin Jerusalem cried Hosanna, “save us,” without being fully aware of what they were asking God to do. God does come to save, but salvation can be a difficult process. It can start with turning tables over. It involves adopting a new, better way of life that looks more like the kingdom of God that Jesus came to proclaim and embody. It comes through the cross.

(*Wind in the Wilderness*, pp. 72-75, 77)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **HC#226 – I Worship You** | HC-226 | HCD21-T16 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#353/HC#49/SOS#67 – Be still, for the presence of the Lord** | TB-566 – same  HC-49  SOS-67 | No HT CD  HCD3-T19 |
| **SB#565/HC#89/SOS#43 – Knowing You** | TB-725 – same  HC-89  SOS-43 | No HT CD  HCD7-T19 |
| **HC#123/SOS#55 – Shine on Us** | HC-123  SOS-55 | HCD11-T13 |
| **SB#32/HC#127 – How deep the Father’s love for us** | TB-663 – same  HC-127 | No HT CD  HCD11-T17 |
| **HC#136 – We All Bow Down** | HC-136 | HCD12-T16 |
| **SB#439/HC#139 – There is a message** | TB-879 – same  HC-139 | No HT CD  HCD12-T19 |
| **HC#156 – Enter In** | HC-156 | HCD14-T16 |
| **HC#160/SOS#125 – I Surrender** | HC-160  SOS-125 | HCD14-T20 |
| **HC#162 – The Power of the Cross** | HC-162 | HCD15-T12 |
| **SB#243/HC#164 – Before the throne of God above** | TB-52 – same  HC-164 | No HT CD  HCD15-T14 |
| **HC#166 – We Fall Down** | HC-166 | HCD15-T16 |
| **HC#188 – Save Now** | HC-188 | HCD17-T18 |
| **SB#376/HC#219 – King of kings, majesty** | TB-722 – same  HC-219 | No HT CD  HCD20-T19 |
| **SB#209 – When Jesus looked o’er Galilee** | TB-70 – Fewster | HTD3-T13 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#498 – I want the faith of God** | TB-159 – Trentham | HTD8-T17 (4 vs.) |

**[Congregational prayer, please print in bulletin.]**

**Congregational Prayer:**

Jesus, we confess to you that we wave palms one day, but through our actions we are guilty for turning away from you. Forgive us for the times when we settle for quick and easy solutions. There are times when our actions, inactions, and thoughts try to tame you rather than focus on the life you lived. You lived a life full of grace, mercy, and love. Thank you for loving, living, dying, and rising again. There is so much mystery in who you are, what you did, yet we are not a mystery to you. Thank you for who you are and what you are doing; in Jesus’ name. Amen.

(*Wind in the Wilderness*, p. 78)

**Missionary Moment**

**Announcements and Offering**

**Testimony of Faith – [Choose someone from the congregation who can testify on this theme.]**

**Message – *A Taste of the Good Life – Zechariah***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **HC#160/SOS#125 – I Surrender** | HC-160  SOS-125 | HCD14-T20 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#182/HC#12/SOS#121 – Lord, make Calvary real to me** | TB-741 – same  HC-12  SOS-121 | No HT CD  HCD1B-T12 |
| **HC#98/SOS#104 – Nothing but Thy Blood** | HC-98  SOS-104 | HCD8-T18 |
| **HC#123/SOS#55 – Shine on Us** | HC-123  SOS-55 | HCD11-T13 |
| **HC#128 – My Tribute** | HC-128 | HCD11-T18 |
| **HC#136 – We All Bow Down** | HC-136 | HCD12-T16 |
| **SB#439/HC#139 – There is a message** | TB-879 – same  HC-139 | No HT CD  HCD12-T19 |
| **HC#156 – Enter In** | HC-156 | HCD14-T16 |
| **HC#179 – Come to Jesus** | HC-179 | HCD16-T19 |
| **HC#198 – In Jesus’ Name** | HC-198 | HCD18-T18 |
| **SB#935/HC#203 – There are people hurting** | TB-886 – They need Christ  HC-203 | No HT CD  HCD19-T13 |
| **HC#205 – Closer Still** | HC-205 | HCD19-T15 |
| **SB#376/HC#219 – King of kings, majesty** | TB-722 – same  HC-219 | No HT CD  HCD20-T19 |
| **HC#223 – All Glory Be to Christ** | HC-223 | HCD21-T13 |
| **HC#224 – Be unto Your Name** | HC-224 | HCD21-T14 |
| **HC#226 – I Worship You** | HC-226 | HCD21-T16 |
| **SB#178/SOS#95 – Jesus, keep me near the cross** | TB-238 – Near the Cross  TB-237 – Healing Stream  SOS-95 | HTD2-T5 (3 vs.)  HTD5-T8 (3 vs.) |

**Benediction:**

**24**To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— **25**to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Jude 24-25 (NIV)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SB#819/HC#202 – O Church, arise** | TB-777 – same  HC-202 | No HT CD  HCD19-T12 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#241 – And can it be** | TB-445 – Sagina | HTD4-T13 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#936 – Wanted, hearts baptized with fire** | TB-370 – Hyfrydol  TB-394 – Austria  HC-114 | HTD1-T14 (4 vs.)  HTD1-T2 (3 vs.)  HCD10-T14 |
| **SB#938 – We have caught the vision splendid** | TB-361 – Blaenwern  TB-394 – Austria | HTD5-T3 (3 vs.) HTD1-T2 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#1031/HC#283 – Lord, if Your presence** | TB-740 – same  HC-283 | No HT CD  HCD27-T13 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lent 2022 – Palm Sunday** | |
| **DRAMA**  **Criminal Activity**  **By Martyn Scott Thomas**  © Copyright 2021 by Martyn Scott Thomas. All rights reserved. Used by permission. | |
| **Topic:** | God’s house |
| **Scripture:** | Matthew 21:12-17 |
| **Synopsis:** | A Temple merchant reports Jesus’s activities to the authorities. |
| **Characters:** | Officer Riley – a lawman  Simon Teller – a Temple merchant |
| **Props/Costumes:** | Dark clothes (navy blue or black), a notebook, and a pen for Riley. Casual or biblical dress for Simon. |
| **Setting:** | Riley and Simon could be seated or standing. |
| **Running time:** | 3 minutes |

[*Riley and Simon are center stage.*]

**Riley:** Alright, for the record, please state your full name and occupation.

**Simon:** Simon Teller. I am a merchant in the Temple court.

**Riley:** [*writing in his notebook*] And what do you sell?

**Simon:** Small birds. Mostly doves.

**Riley:** [*writing in his notebook*] Got it. And were you present yesterday in the Temple when the alleged incident took place?

**Simon:** Yes, I was seated at my table, going about business as usual, when Jesus came storming in.

**Riley:** [*reading from notebook*] That would be Jesus of Nazareth?

**Simon:** Yes, that’s the troublemaker.

**Riley:** And you were a witness to his actions?

**Simon:** [*agitated*] Witness? I was a victim of that mad man. He threw my table halfway across the courtyard. I lost all my inventory.

**Riley:** [*questioning*] Inventory?

**Simon:** Yes, all my doves.

**Riley:** Approximately how many?

**Simon:** At least 100.

**Riley:** [*looking at him unbelieving*] 100?

**Simon:** Maybe 75.

**Riley:** [*still staring, not speaking*]

**Simon:** Okay, maybe it was 40, but they’re all gone.

**Riley:** And the value of your inventory?

**Simon:** Close to 200 denarii.

**Riley:** That’s over sixteen sestertii [ses-**tur**-ee-ī] per dove. Doesn’t that seem a bit high to you?

**Simon:** [*stumbling*] Uh, yeah, well that includes the, uh, transportation and feeding and, uh, incidentals, you know?

**Riley:** Incidentals?

**Simon:** [*hopeful*] Pain and suffering?

**Riley:** [*sighing*] Right.

**Simon:** [*quickly changing subjects*] And besides, I thought we were talking about Jesus and his rampage of terror.

**Riley:** [*checking notebook*] Can you describe this rampage?

**Simon:** Well, I’ve seen this Jesus before, he comes in here all the time. But this time was different. It was like there was fire in his eyes.

**Riley:** [*writing in notebook*] Go on.

**Simon:** Anyway, he starts shouting something about a den of thieves and starts flipping tables and chasing people out of the Temple.

**Riley:** Which people?

**Simon:** Other respectable merchants like me and the money changers.

**Riley:** [*looking up*] Respectable money changers?

**Simon:** They’re just doing a necessary job.

**Riley:** The same as you, I’m sure.

**Simon:** [*defensive*] Look, I’m not the criminal here. Jesus busted up the place.

**Riley:** What happened next?

**Simon:** That’s the weird thing, he sat down and started healing people.

**Riley:** Healing?

**Simon:** Yeah. They brought him the blind and lame and he healed them right there.

**Riley:** It doesn’t even sound like the same person.

**Simon:** I know! And then this group of children started shouting, “Praise God for the Son of David!”

**Riley:** Wow!

**Simon:** I know. The leading priests and teachers were fuming. First this guy comes marching in and destroys the place and then the people praise him for it. I’ve never seen anything like it.

**Riley:** I may have to question this Jesus character myself.

**Simon:** He should be pretty easy to find. There are crowds following him everywhere.

**Riley:** Thank you for your time, Mr. Teller.

**Simon:** Yeah, no problem. I hope you catch this guy.

**Riley:** We’ll do our best.

**Simon:** And when you get him, don’t be afraid to throw the book at him.

**Riley:** We’ll do everything we can within the law.

**Simon:** Somehow, I don’t know if that will be enough.

[*Blackout*]

***Wind IN THE WILDERNESS***

**Children’s Moment – Palm Sunday**

***A Taste of the Good Life – Zechariah***

**April 10, 2022**

**By Katie Laidlaw**

**Scripture:** **Matthew 21:1-17; Psalm 34:8**

[*The Narrator should call the children of the congregation forward and have them sit or stand around ‘campfire’.*]

**Script:**

I am so hungry! Cooking while camping is so difficult. I keep ruining all of my food! All I wanted is a good campfire roasted hot dog or piece of freshly caught fish… ruined.

The worst part of messing up when cooking is that you have this idea or expectation of what you are going to have. After all the hard work of creating your meal, you can’t wait to enjoy what you have been looking forward to, except when you take a bite and realize that you ruined it and are immediately disappointed.

Have you ever been disappointed after looking forward to something? [*Allow children to respond*]

It is hard to be disappointed after being ready and so excited about something.

On the other side of things, have you ever waited a long time for something, and it turned out to be absolutely amazing? [*Allow children to respond*]

People were waiting for the Messiah for many, many years! The Messiah, the one who would save people from their sins was promised and talked about a very long time ago. So when Jesus, the Messiah, rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, it was a huge deal! Finally! The Messiah was finally here – all of the waiting was over!

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey, people laid their cloaks on the road, shouting…

Do you know what the people were shouting as Jesus entered Jerusalem? [*Allow children to respond*]

**“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”**

This grand entrance was definitely not a disappointment. Actually, the grand entrance of Jesus brought people joy and hope. Sins were going to be forgiven, love was going to be experienced, and new life was almost here. Hope had finally come!

The goodness of Jesus was going to be experienced as he performed miracles and preached to so many. And this was only the beginning. How exciting!

Psalm 34:8 says, **“Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!”** (NLT)

When we place our hope in Jesus, we will never be disappointed. The Lord is good and wants us to experience the joys of His love and forgiveness. When we are friends with Jesus, we can have joy even in the biggest of disappointments because God is good and loves us so much.

Well, maybe I can learn to taste God’s goodness in my cooking… I need all the help I can get!

Pray.

**Main Points:**

* It is hard to be disappointed after being ready and so excited about something.
* The grand entrance of Jesus brought people joy and hope. Sins were going to be forgiven, love was going to be experienced, new life was almost here – hope had finally come!
* When we place our hope in Jesus, we will never be disappointed.
* When we are friends with Jesus, we can have joy even in the biggest of disappointments because God is good and loves us so much.

**Questions:**

* Have you ever been disappointed after looking forward to something?
* Have you ever waited a long time for something, and it turned out to be absolutely amazing?
* Do you know what the people were shouting as Jesus entered Jerusalem?

***Wind IN THE WILDERNESS***

**Lenten Sermon – Palm Sunday**

***A Taste of the Good Life – Zechariah***

**April 10, 2022**

**By Major Katherine Clausell**

**Scripture:** **Zechariah 9:9-10 and Matthew 21:1-17**

**Opening Illustration:**

Have you read the series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*?The series was written in the 1950sby C. S. Lewis, writer, academic, and apologist, who was the chair of medieval and Renaissance literature at Cambridge. This series of seven books is rich in theology. Different characters face unique challenges. One character is present in all books and pulls all of the stories together: The great and powerful Aslan, who is not tame but is always good.

In the first book in the series, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,*Lewis tells the story of four siblings who discover the land of Narnia by entering the world through a magical wardrobe. The children speak at one point with local Narnian creatures Mr. and Mrs. Beaver about Aslan, the King of Narnia. The children heard stories about the powerful Aslan, but were unsure what to make of him. The children initially assumed Aslan was a man and quickly found out that he was a great lion. “Then he isn’t safe?” asked Lucy, one of the children. Mr. Beaver replied, “Safe?...don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.” Later in the book we read another warning: “He’s wild you know. Not like a *tame* lion.”

Not tame. According to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, one way of defining the word *tame* is “Not wild: trained to obey people.”

While everyone knew that all would be well when Aslan arrived, they also knew that Aslan was not a tame lion. They knew that he was wild, but full of grace; that he was good, but not safe. Aslan was not a predictable lion. He wasn’t at the Narnians’ beck and call, nor was he readily available to the visiting children. Yet, even when the characters of Narnia didn’t fully understand the outcome of events, he was always working toward goodness and grace.

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* pp. 69-70)

**Introduction:**

Jesus isn’t tame, either. It’s far too easy to talk about God without engaging in who God truly is—who Jesus, fully human and fully God, was on earth and who he is today. We often equate Jesus to a super celebrity or a powerful prophet of his time and we see him as being safe and predictable. This morning, we celebrate the prophecy that our God is coming to us as foretold in Zechariah 9. But a word of caution is needed here. We often do not think through the full meaning of Jesus’ triumphal entry. We fail to pause to consider that God’s visit might be frightening and challenging rather than something we welcome. We fondly claim that Jesus is full of grace and love while forgetting that he turned over the money tables (Matthew 21). What we often get in the media is an image of Jesus that pales in comparison to the Jesus we read about in the Scriptures.

But Jesus is not someone we can train or manipulate. We know that Jesus is good, just, and full of grace. But Jesus was hardly predictable. He was never *just* fully human. He was also fully divine (see Salvation Army doctrine #4). Jesus was ever present and part of the triune God (see Salvation Army doctrine #3). He turned over tables in worship places; he challenged the status quo; he healed on days when he wasn’t supposed to; he partied with the people, and turned his back on the religious elite by choosing to eat with those whom the religious leaders rejected. This Jesus was far from predictable. He was good, but he wasn’t safe. He wasn’t tame.

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* pp. 70-71)

**Transition:**

So, friends, let me introduce you to the Jesus that the prophet Zechariah envisioned and foretold would come. Nowhere is Jesus’ wild and untamed nature on display more clearly than in his procession to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, a week before he is crucified. Jesus enters Jerusalem to the praise and excitement of large crowds, then goes to the Temple and causes a major disturbance by throwing out those who are buying and selling.

In Matthews’ Gospel, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a very specific animal. Well, it’s really two animals: a donkey and a colt (Matthew 21:1-7). Matthew makes clear that these animals represent the messianic fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures; Zechariah 9:9 associates the king who will come with both the donkey and the colt:

*Look, your king will come to you.*

*He is righteous and victorious.*

*He is humble and riding on an ass,*

*on a colt, the offspring of a donkey.*

Matthey 21:4-5 quotes Zechariah as a way to describe Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem as a fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy.

It’s important to recognize that Jesus specifically instructed his disciples to bring these animals to him for the purpose of his entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-3).

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* pp. 72-73)

(*Faith Factor OT,* p. 371)

1. **Historical Dilemma – Jesus’ Triumphal Entry**
   1. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem stood in contrast to that of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Jerusalem.
   2. Jesus’ procession was a “prearranged counter-procession,” as it deliberately countered what was happening on the other side of the city.
   3. Pilates’ procession embodied the power, glory, and violence of the empire that ruled the world. While Jesus’ procession embodied an alternative vision, the Kingdom of God.
   4. Matthew’s distinctive and emphatic assertion that Jesus borrows two animals for his entry into Jerusalem exemplifies Zechariah’s prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, that the coming king would be both “powerful and humble.”

**Side note:**  The name Zechariah means, “the Lord remembered.” He is widely considered the key prophet of the postexilic time. Postexilic time is the period when the people of Judah would return from Babylon. Zechariah’s pedigree was outstanding: Zechariah’s grandfather, Iddo, was the head of one of the twelve priestly families of Israel. During the time of restoration, 520-518 BC, Zechariah’s message focused less on the rebuilding of the temple, but more on rebuilding the people’s relationship with God. He was more concerned about the Hebrew people getting their lives back to righteous living with God and living their lives anticipating God’s reign.

* 1. All four Gospels contain stories of crowds that gathered around Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday in fulfillment of this prophecy from Zechariah.
  2. The crowd shouted and sang, *“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”* (Matthew 21:9).
  3. It is believed that many of the people who shouted “Hosanna” are the same people that would later shout “Crucify him! Crucify him!” later that week (27:22).
  4. How could their glee turn to such murderous thoughts so quickly? The answer is found in the people’s expectations about who Jesus was and what he was going to do. It was no coincidence that they greeted Jesus waving palm fronds and shouting “Hosanna!”
  5. The palm fronds were understood to represent military victory. This suggests that the crowd who welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem expected Jesus to bring them victory, to come as a conquering King. But this king is not at their beck and call. **Jesus is not tame.**
  6. When the palm-waving crowd shouted, “Hosanna!” or “save please,” they echoed Psalm 118:25-26:

*Lord, please save us!*

*Lord, please let us succeed!*

*The one who enters in the Lord’s name is blessed;*

*we bless all of you from the Lord’s house.*

* 1. They expected Jesus to come to them bringing salvation in the name of the Lord, as the son of David. But the one who comes in the name of the Lord comes to purify and cleanse, not just to save. He brings judgment, not validation. **Jesus is not safe.**

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* pp. 72-75)

1. **Current Context and Challenge – Matthew 21:12**

Not unsimilar to today, Jesusencounters people who have come to offer sacrifices, buying, selling and exchanging currency in the Temple. Jesus is angered by the money changers and sacrifice sellers taking advantage of hardworking folk trying to do right in the eyes of God—many of the people, after all, had traveled a long journey to the Temple, and needed to exchange their foreign currency and purchase animals to sacrifice. They were vulnerable to unfair prices and exchange rates. In turning over the tables and chasing out the moneychangers with a whip, he calls out the people of Judah and Jerusalem, criticizing them for using Temple worship to mask their greed and lack of justice. It’s not just the money changers that Jesus casts out, but the religious leaders and worshipers as well.

In the same week that he knocked over tables in the Temple, Jesus would breathe his last breath. Jesus’ last week began as he approached the Temple, a place where God’s people were supposed to be able to experience the fullness of Yahweh. But the Temple was no longer the Temple that God intended; it was more like a hideout for crooks.” So Jesus turned the tables over. **Jesus is not tame. Jesus is not safe.**

What would Jesus find if he came to our churches today? What tables would he turn over? Our past and current history is rampant with religious leaders who kill, enslave, and practice genocide on marginalized groups in the name of God. Some clergy use funerals as opportunities for quick altar calls. Some pastors fall into the temptation of preaching a prosperity-based gospel that makes people feel good but provides no depth for the times when life gets challenging. Some ministers preach what some want to hear without listening to what God is actually saying or recognizing where the Holy One is moving. The same danger exists for churchgoers as well as church leaders. How tempting it is to regard God and our religion as a refuge, a safe haven we can retreat into for protection even though our lives create or participate in injustice all around us. Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his actions in the Temple remind us that God’s coming might rub us the wrong way. God’s goodness might judge us and challenge us to a better way of life. Jesus is neither safe nor tame, **but He is good.**

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* pp. 75-76)

1. **Our Response –** I think part of the challenge of the crowd that greeted Jesus riding into town was that their best intentions were not fully thought through. The crowds were hoping that the Messiah would come to save them on their terms, but Jesus had a greater plan. We often want salvation to happen on our terms, not God’s and our intentions are not fully thought through. Here is one example:

Not long ago, Starbucks tried something new with the best of intentions. Baristas were encouraged to write the words *race together* on random cups of coffee. The goal of this project was to initiate conversations regarding race relations. This concept, though intended to “get people talking,” didn’t provide adequate tools to foster the conversation. Sometimes doing something without listening, pausing, planning, and praying can actually do harm. But the challenge really came when people waiting for a cup of coffee didn’t have the adequate tools and ultimately time to talk about such personal matters that have lasted for generations. The initial idea was good; however, the execution failed. Starbucks tried to jump-start something rather than honoring the process that can take time.

It's tempting to hope for a quick, easy solution on our own terms rather than what God has in view. The crowd in Jerusalem cried Hosanna, “save us,” without being fully aware of what they were asking God to do. God does come to save, but salvation can be a difficult process. It can start with turning tables over. It involves adopting a new, better way of life that looks more like the kingdom of God that Jesus came to proclaim and embody. It comes through the cross.

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* pp. 76-77)

**Conclusion:**

So, Jesus rarely fits our expectations; we cannot will him to do what we want. Ultimately, the Messiah was not tame. Jesus was and is good. He is just, merciful, and gracious. He healed the sick and touched those whom society rejected. Jesus ate with outcasts and washed the feet of the lowest of society. He showed us a better way through his life and actions. Looking at the entry into Jerusalem is a good way to take a good long look at what we want Jesus to be and to study who Jesus really was. He is far from tame, and that’s a good thing.

(*Wind in the Wilderness,* p. 77)

**[Print in Bulletin]**

**Focus for the Week:**

Create a cross with something that you can find in your home. On the cross, write a word or phrase and carry it with you this Holy week. Choose a word or phrase that will help you remain grounded spiritually as we move closer to the cross and grave.

del Rosario, DJ. *Wind in the Wilderness.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016.