

# Trinity United Reformed Church Wimbledon

## Sunday 28 March 2021 – Palm Sunday Order of Service for 'Worship from Home'



**Led by the Revd Andy Twilley**  
(URC Southern Synod's Training & Development Officer)

### **Call to worship**

Luke 19: 37 - 38

*When Jesus came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

### **Hymn 208 – All glory, laud, and honour, to thee Redeemer King**

All glory, laud, and honour  
to thee, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring!  
Thou art the King of Israel,  
and David's royal Son,  
who in the Lord's name comest,  
the King and Blessed One.

The company of angels  
are praising thee on high,  
and mortal flesh and all things  
created make reply.  
The people of the Hebrews  
with palms before thee went;  
our praise and prayer and anthems  
before thee we present.

To thee before thy Passion  
they sang their hymns of praise;  
to thee now high exalted  
our melody we raise.  
Thou didst accept their praises;  
accept the prayers we bring,  
who in all good delightest,  
Thou good and gracious King.

All glory, laud, and honour  
to thee, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring!  
Thou art the King of Israel,  
and David's royal Son,  
who in the Lord's name comest,  
the King and Blessed One.

Theodulph of Orleans (d.821), tr. J.M. Neale (1818-66)

### ***Prayer of Worship & Adoration***

Lord, as we gather in your presence this morning, as we acknowledge we are in the presence of the King, our hearts are filled with a sense of wonder and awe. In our minds-eye we can picture those crowds on that first Palm Sunday, celebrating your triumphal entry to the city; we can hear the cries of praise and adulation; we can sense the wonder of the angelic throng praising you and exalting you, the King of Israel, the one who was and is Lord of Lords, King of kings.

We worship you Lord, as we acknowledge the amazing truth that you chose to come and be present amongst ordinary people like ourselves, declaring the truth of your eternal Kingdom, demonstrating the reality of that Kingdom.

We exalt you. We worship you... our King: how great thou art!

### ***Hymn 117 (chorus only)***

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
how great thou art, how great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

### ***Confession***

Yet Lord as we acknowledge who you are, as we acknowledge your majesty, splendour and perfect holiness, it highlights the sinfulness and failings in our lives. So Lord, now in the quietness of our hearts, we confess to you those specific things we have done, or thought or said which we know have both offended others and at the same time been an offense to you.

*Pause*

We affirm the truth of the Gospel that God is willing and just to forgive all who truly repent, cleansing us from all unrighteousness.

Thanks be to God who taught all his followers to pray together...

### ***The Lord's Prayer***

*Use either of these forms, or a different version/language if you prefer:*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive  
those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed  
be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on  
earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive  
those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

### ***Hymn 117 - O Lord my God***

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works thy hand hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
how great thou art, how great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander;  
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze;

*Then sings my soul...*

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,  
sent him to die – I scarce can take it in  
that on the cross, our burden gladly bearing,  
he bled and died to take away our sin;

*Then sings my soul...*

When Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation  
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then shall I bow in humble adoration,  
and there proclaim: 'My God, how great thou art!'

*Then sings my soul...*

Russian hymn, tr. Stuart K. Hine (1899-1989) altd.

### ***Bible Reading - Luke 19: 37-44***

<sup>37</sup> As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, <sup>38</sup>saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

<sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop."

<sup>40</sup> He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

<sup>41</sup> As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it,

<sup>42</sup> saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

<sup>43</sup> Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side.

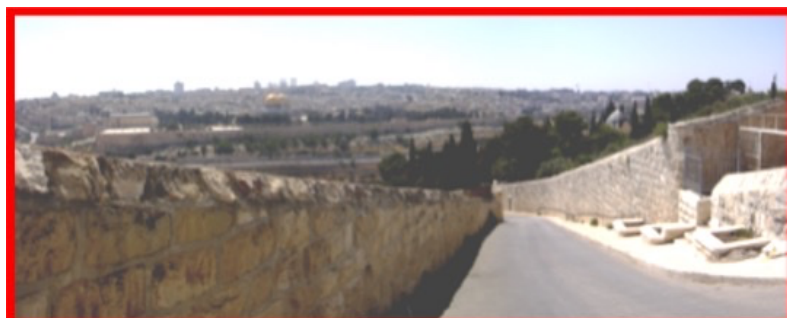
<sup>44</sup> They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God."

### ***Sermon - Jesus weeps over Jerusalem***

This morning we are going to particularly focus on verse 41.

*"As Jesus approached Jerusalem and saw the city he wept over it."*

Take a look at this picture of the pathway from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. You will see a church, built on the spot where it's believed Jesus wept over Jerusalem. It's called the Dominus Flevit. Jesus weeps. What is going on?





It is interesting to note that in the New Testament there are six different words that can be translated as “weeping” words

- we find a “weeping word” for when people died;
- a “weeping word” used when in physical pain or mental anguish;
- another “weeping word” describing emotional grief;
- still another word used when tears were shed;
- they even had two “weeping words” for the purpose of bringing lament to God.

Clearly the Jewish people were not shy when it came to expressing their emotions.

Now let’s be clear: the weeping word used here is not the Greek word *Dakruo*, which suggests a gentle sobbing, or a tear almost invisibly trickling down our cheek.

No. The word used here expresses deep & fundamental anguish. It comes from the Greek word: *Klaio*: deep seated grief... I’m sure we’ve all known that sort of grief where our whole being hurts, yes, physically hurts. This weeping is the loud, uncontrollable cry we might give when mourning for the loss of a loved one. Such is Jesus’ weeping; heartfelt anguish, coming from the very depth of his being.

BUT hold on a minute, when you look at the wider situation, it feels hard to understand why Jesus is weeping now! Surely there are so many reasons he should be happy!

Think about it: he is surrounded by people who are joyful at His presence.

The crowds have dared to ignore the warnings of the religious leaders about following him and they see Jesus as the One they want to follow and acknowledge as their King. And did you notice, they are really praising

God, joyfully, wholeheartedly, in loud voices; praising God for the miracles he has performed; praising God for the lives changed through His ministry! Surely nothing would please him more than to hear the people acknowledging him as their King, praising God that their deliverer had come! And now, on the road to Jerusalem, the grand climax, a triumphant entry to the city.

The crowds would have known they were witnessing the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy detailed by Zechariah (9: 9-10). Five hundred years earlier the prophet announced that a Saviour would come to restore the people to their rightful position. For 500 years the people had been waiting, and in their minds the equation was simple; when a king-like figure rides into town on a donkey it means that peace was finally going to come to Israel. No more bowing to the Romans. No more second-class citizenship. No more toleration of foreign "gods". No more poverty, no more intolerance, no more war. Just peace, and the restoration of their promised land. All so perfect... but hold on a minute; so much about this situation is not what it appears.

Why then does Jesus express such deep and profound sadness? I want to suggest two reasons. First of all, Jesus senses the crowd had so many misconceptions and wrong expectations.

The expectation that Jesus - the long-awaited Messiah-King - would go to the palace from where Herod governed and in an act of supreme power, throw Herod out, and start his reign of justice and peace.

The expectation that Jesus - the Saviour, would bring about a fundamental turn around that all the nations surrounding Israel would be in awe and wonder, keen to pay tribute to this new King.

The expectation that Jesus - ruler of the nation - would restore and establish peace. A united nation, resolutely committed to YHWH, the Lord. That's how the Jews understood this prophecy.

Such expectations fundamentally wrong: and Jesus weeps. Despite the passion and fervour of the crowds on that road to Jerusalem Jesus knew he wouldn't fulfil those expectations and maybe he even sensed that in a short space of time the tone of the crowd would turn ugly. That in just five days the crowds' cries of praise will change to 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' They will line the streets of the city again, this time to curse and mock and spit on him as they watch him carry His cross to His death.

In five days' time those closest to him will desert him. The disciples; those who had shared so much with their Rabbi... where will they be? Judas will have betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver. Peter will have denied him, and the other disciples, nowhere to be seen, shaken to the core by the catastrophic end of Jesus' ministry.

In five days' time the Romans will still be in charge.

In five days' time the religious leaders will celebrate, Jesus revealed as the fraud, the imposter they knew him to be.

In five days' time there will be no more passion and no more approval for the one who rode a donkey into town.

Yet there is a second reason for Jesus weeping. And it's nothing to do with the pain he will endure, or the reaction he will experience, or the loneliness and isolation of the journey ahead. No, Jesus is weeping over Jerusalem because of his intense love for the people living there; the futility of their lives; their loss for eternity; their blindness to see the one who could give them life in all its fulness; their failure to understand that here was the one who could transform their lives from despair to hope, from futility to purpose, from disillusionment to expectancy, from emptiness to life in all its fullness, from anxiety to peace, from isolation and loneliness to knowing the loving presence of his heavenly father.

THIS is why Jesus weeps... for THEM! Such is his LOVE for them.

There is a beautiful song which includes these lyrics:

*Such Love, pure as the whitest snow  
Such love, weeps for the shame I know;  
Such love, paying the debt I owe;  
O Jesus, such love.*

As I close, I end with two closing thoughts.

FIRST: I hope and pray that this Easter you will know the reality of the depth of the love of Jesus, supremely demonstrated as he dies for us, the perfect substitute, dying so that we might live.

SECONDLY: there is a challenge rooted in these events, and I present it as a question: Jesus looked across Jerusalem and wept: today as we look out across Wimbledon will WE weep for all those around us who are struggling, lost, grieving, hurting, like sheep without a shepherd?

And will we allow that weeping to move us to action such that we will play OUR part in bringing the amazing and wonderful message of hope and peace to them, wherever we encounter such folk, in our homes, in our neighbourhood and in our work places?

Let's pause and reflect on our response to God's Word before Sam leads us in prayer.

## ***Prayer of Intercession***

Dear Lord, we come before you now with our prayers for others in our community and around the world.

Let us pray.

Healing, hope-giving God we pray for the world, still tackling the global pandemic of Covid-19 after over a year of lockdown, living, working and worshipping apart, in service of protecting life.

We pray for those who are bereaved, for those who have been ill, or still suffer symptoms of disease, physical and mental, for those for whom isolation has compounded loneliness or other challenges.

Bring comfort, healing and restoration to all your people.

We pray for health workers after a year of unimaginable pressures and endeavours, for all front-line workers in education, essential services, retail and infrastructure.

We pray for scientists leading us out of the pandemic through innovation and industry, and we pray that all people will reap the benefits of these through fair distribution of vaccines, medicine and expertise.

We pray for decision-makers that they find your wisdom as even now they face difficult choices about the way forward.

We pray for your church after a year of worshipping online, by phone or alone and apart; of learning and sharing new skills to respond to this new world; of reinforcing and renewing connections even at a distance. We pray that all these trials will leave us stronger in our walk with you in the months and years to come.

We pray for young people, from learning in school to learning at home and back to school again, separated from friends, from the experiences and growth that can only be had in fellowship with others. We pray this past year brings new lessons and insights, and that harm done and progress missed is alleviated

We pray for those in economic hardship, those who have lost jobs, or struggle to make ends meet. We pray for all those supporting them, for charities, food banks and advice services. Show us the way to support, heal and restore.

We pray for refugees and displaced people. Help us to open our doors to them. We pray for prisoners. Fill our hearts with compassion and mercy for them.



In the moment of silence we bring before you those situations and causes known to us and dear to us.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4*

Send us out in this work for the Lord and be with us in the days ahead.

In Jesus's name. Amen

### ***Hymn 574 - Go forth and tell (tune: Woodlands)***

Go forth and tell! O church of God, awake!  
God's saving news to all the nations take:  
proclaim Christ Jesus, saviour, Lord, and King,  
that all the world his worthy praise may sing.

Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;  
he will in grace respond to all who call:  
how shall they call if they have never heard  
the gracious invitation of his word?

Go forth and tell! The doors are open wide:  
share God's good gifts - let no one be denied;  
live out your life as Christ your Lord shall choose,  
your ransomed powers for his sole glory use.

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, arise!  
Go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;  
go till all nations his great name adore  
and serve him, Lord and king for evermore

James Seddon (1915-83)

### ***Closing Prayer & Blessing***

We began by hearing the words recorded in Luke 19:  
*"Peace in Heaven. Glory in the highest."*

And now as we go out into this week, Lord we pray that we will know the reality of your peace, and wherever you take us, may our lives be lived for your glory.

In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen