



Notices:

Hey wonderful small group leaders, here are a few notices to share with your group!

Easter // We're so looking forward to celebrating Easter together! We have services on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Check out bvc.so/easter for more details

Parenting Evening // On the evening of April 19th we're looking forward to an evening workshop with Shine Youth looking at how we can support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our kids and youth! More details and sign up bvc.so/parentingevening

Leadership Lab // Are you exploring a call to leadership, or would you like to start developing your leadership skills? Leadership Lab is a free, open to all, online course starting 17th April. Find out more: bvc.so/leadershiplab

Palm Sunday - All Age Service

Date: Sunday 2nd April 2023

Speakers: Becky Stamps, Cap & Jo Ramdas-Harsia

Key Verses: Matthew 21:1-17

Talk Summary:

Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem is modelled on a Roman 'triumph', which was essentially a victory parade. Large numbers of soldiers, horses, and trumpeters would process in front and behind the army leader or Emperor on his chariot, and the local people would be

expected to turn out to shout praises and show devotion to the conquering ruler. The display of the immense power and authority of Rome would essentially be saying to the local people, 'We're big, you're small; we're strong, you're weak and we're here to stay.' Every year, the Romans would parade through Jerusalem at the time of the passover, in this 'triumphal' style, demonstrating the might of Rome and directly poking fun at the Jewish festival's roots in the freedom God gave how people at the first passover and Exodus (see Exodus chapter 12).

Jesus subverts this tradition to demonstrate both his own lordship and the values of the Kingdom of God. He rides a very young donkey, instead of a big white charger; his followers are ordinary people who have chosen to come with him and celebrate rather than soldiers or conscripted locals. His followers wave palm branches (traditional Jewish symbols of victory) not weapons. In doing so, he fulfils the Zechariah 9:9 prophecy about a humble, gentle King, coming with power *for* rather than power *over* people, a King who comes to save rather than conquer, who is going towards his death rather than towards a victor's palace.

In Jerusalem, Jesus goes to the Temple and meets 4 different groups of people: the merchants; the sick/suffering; the priests and teachers of the Law; and some noisy children. He treats each group in a way that shows a different aspect of his character and of the Kingdom he's bringing in:

- With the merchants: he becomes angry at the injustice of their deception and stealing from people, and because of what this says about God (preventing non-Jews and the poor from worshipping).
- With the sick and suffering: he heals and teaches them
- With the priests and teachers of the Law, who are 'indignant' about him healing and being worshipped by children, he demonstrates their blindness to what's really going on
- With the children, he accepts their worship

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant your group)

- What markers of power and authority are we used to in our culture? How is Jesus' use of authority the same as, or different to, those we see in the world around us?
- Jesus was angry with the merchants for reasons of justice; the priests were angry with the children because their pride was hurt by the children's worship of someone they dismissed. What do we get angry about? Are we more like Jesus or the priests?
- How could we make church a place of 'prayer for all nations' (i.e. for non-British people and non-Christians, as the heart behind the 'court of the Gentiles' carries both meanings)? How are we doing at welcoming people who are seeking God into our community?

Worship

Small group Worship & Prayer resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship