

The road into Jerusalem is crowded.

There is dust in the air, cloaks thrown on the ground, branches cut and waved, voices rising—*Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!* It feels like a moment of hope breaking through. A people long burdened by occupation and uncertainty catching sight, at last, of something like deliverance.

And yet, even as the crowd swells, we know something they do not.

We know where this road leads.

We know that the same city that shouts *Hosanna* will soon echo with *Crucify him*. We know that this procession is not the beginning of a political revolution, but the beginning of a suffering that will unsettle every expectation of what a king should be.

And perhaps that tension feels especially close to us this year.

Because we, too, are living in a world thick with uncertainty. A world where the language of power is loud. Where nations posture and threaten. Where war and violence are not distant abstractions but lived realities for millions. Where the longing for peace feels both urgent and fragile.

Into that kind of world, Palm Sunday speaks—not as a quaint re-enactment, but as a deeply subversive vision.

“Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey.”

Not a war horse. Not a chariot. Not surrounded by armies.

A donkey.

It is almost easy to miss how deliberate this is. Jesus is not simply being modest. He is making a theological claim. This is what the reign of God looks like. This is what power looks like when it is shaped by the heart of God.

And it stands in stark contrast to the kingdoms of this world.

Because the world knows how to recognise power. It recognises force, dominance, control. It trusts what can compel obedience or secure victory. And in times of international tension and war, that logic becomes even more pronounced. Strength must meet strength. Violence must be countered with greater violence. Security must be achieved at any cost.

But here comes Jesus, riding a donkey into the centre of it all, embodying an entirely different way.

And if we listen closely, the other readings deepen that picture.

In Isaiah, we meet the servant who does not turn back in the face of suffering. “I gave my back to those who struck me... I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.” There is a quiet, resolute courage here—not the courage of retaliation, but the courage of faithfulness. The servant trusts that God vindicates, even when the world wounds.

And then in Philippians, we are taken even further. Christ Jesus, “though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself... taking the form of a servant... becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.”

This is not weakness. It is not passivity.

It is a radical redefinition of power.

Power, in the kingdom of God, is not grasped—it is given. Not enforced—it is offered. Not secured through domination—but revealed through self-giving love.

And that is profoundly confronting.

Because if we are honest, we often want a different kind of king.

We want a king who will fix things quickly. Who will defeat what threatens us. Who will make the world safe on our terms. We want clarity, control, resolution.

But Jesus does not enter Jerusalem to meet those expectations.

He enters to transform them.

The crowd asks, “Who is this?” And the answer they give—“This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth”—is true, but incomplete. Because the full answer will only become clear as the week unfolds. As the donkey gives way to the cross. As the shouts of praise give way to silence, and then to mockery.

Only then do we begin to see who this king really is.

And so Palm Sunday places us in a moment of decision.

Will we follow this king—not just in celebration, but in the costly path he walks?

Will we allow his way of being to reshape our own?

Because it is one thing to wave branches. It is another to take on the mind of Christ.

Paul is very direct about that: “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.”

This is not abstract theology. It is an invitation to a way of life.

In a world marked by conflict, it asks: how do we live as people shaped by humility rather than self-assertion?

In a world that normalises hostility, it asks: how do we embody reconciliation?

In a world that often rewards domination, it asks: how do we practise self-giving love without losing courage or conviction?

These are not easy questions. They do not have simple answers. And they do not remove the real complexities of global conflict or human suffering.

But Palm Sunday insists that the way of Jesus is not irrelevant to such a world—it is precisely for such a world.

Because the peace he brings is not fragile optimism. It is not dependent on circumstances. It is rooted in the very life of God—a peace that can endure even through betrayal, violence, and death.

And that is where this road is taking us.

As we move into Holy Week, we are not just remembering events. We are entering into a story that reveals the deepest truth about God and the deepest calling of our lives.

The one who rides into Jerusalem on a donkey will be lifted up on a cross.

And in that lifting up, the world will see—not a failure of power, but its fulfilment. Not the defeat of love, but its victory.

“Therefore God also highly exalted him...”

But that exaltation comes through descent. Through humility. Through obedience. Through love poured out.

So today, as the crowds gather and the branches are raised, we stand with them—but we also stand with a deeper awareness.

We know that this king will not meet our expectations.

But he will meet our deepest need.

And so the invitation is simple, but not easy:

Follow him.

Follow him into the city.

Follow him into the tension.

Follow him into the cross-shaped way of love.

Because in a world longing for peace, this is the way the kingdom comes.

Hosanna