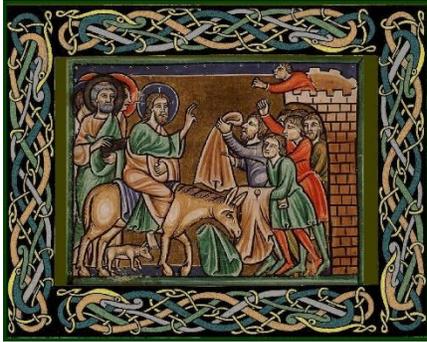


Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, Mar 25, 2018 – Palm Sunday

What's All the Fuss? (Psalm 31:9-16 & Mark 11:1-11)



Then those who went ahead and those who followed
were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed in the one
who comes in the name of the Lord."
(Mark 11:9)

Overview

What would it have been like to be there at the beginning of Passover as Jesus entered Jerusalem? – who would you imagine yourself to be to get that sense? – here are my ponderings – I imagined myself to be a retired functionary from the Temple – an administrator who had given my life to making the Temple available for people to worship and experience the glory of God in all of its regal majesty – I'm now having a second glass of wine with old friends, many of whom worked at the Temple with me, after dinner that day – and I'm trying make sense of all the fuss

Provocative Points to Ponder

- Rumours of this rabbi preaching a radical prophetic message in the villages of Galilee – the chief priests were clearly bothered by his work and the rumours that arose from it – I got curious, so I thought I'd go over to that gate and see what all the fuss was about
- The crowd wasn't that big – nothing compared to the crowd that gathered for Pontius Pilate's grand entry into the city over at the north gate that morning – with all the imperial pomp and circumstance – the adoring welcome from the elites of the city and the masses hoping for a special bit of patronage to honour this most holy of holidays for us – that was the parade and party to be at – this was a bit of a side show, really
- And this Jesus – he was a bit of a disappointment to me – came in riding on the colt of a donkey – one of his followers pointed out that it was mentioned in the book of the prophet Zechariah – a sign of humility and something about a kingdom of peace that would banish weapons – God's anointed One coming as a servant and having to suffer violent opposition from those who wanted to keep their war-like ways – it might have fit with what little I knew about his teaching, but that's hardly the kind of king that we Jews needed at this point in our history – better someone like David who knew how to defeat the Romans, or at least get a better deal from them
- Some seemed quite fanatical – doing that thing with the robes on the road as a sing of homage and obedience – they were the loudest ones, shouting those ancient words of praise, "Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!" – that did get the crowd going – a lot of them joined in

- But, interestingly, not his disciples, those who had been with him during his preaching and teaching out in the villages – they were strangely silent – they looked very nervous – they kept looking over the crowd, small as it was - as if they were expecting trouble – nothing happened, but their anxiety was obvious
- But I have to admit that there was something about Jesus himself – he didn't say a thing – he looked calm but determined – there was a presence, a power, a promise, almost – I can't figure it out, but I can't shake it either – is this really how God is going to save us? – humility, peace, justice, healing – I can't imagine it – but I will be watching to see what happens this week
- is there any wine left? – and how about some music?

Your Notes

Frameworks for our Prayers

Thanks – for confusing curiosity in our lives – for those times when things don't make sense and we have to imagine new ways of understanding reality – for your Spirit to guide in those changes, in that growth – for your promise to lead us into a clearer understanding of the justice, kindness, and humility that arise from a deeper relationship with you - (a time of silence for conversing with God about these realities in your lives)

Help – to face illnesses and uncertainties in our lives and in the lives of those we love (name those on our souls)

Awe – the ways you keep surprising us with clearer and deeper ways of understanding how you grasp us with your love and embrace us into your mission – (a time of silence for conversing with God about these realities in your lives)