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The Week that is called Holy

Revd Nathan Falla

Everything has been leading up to this point, all the Sundays in Lent and the forty days preparation, it is like the music has been building to a big crescendo that will culminate with the sound of nails, the cry of pain and then there is silence in the hopeless abyss of Holy Saturday, before the dawn chorus breaks in announcing Easter Day.

It is a week of drama but often we miss out events, and don't take the time to reflect on all that took place in the week that we now call Holy. There is even the danger that some people go from the jubilation of Palm Sunday to the celebration of Easter Sunday, without going through the pain of Good Friday and remembering the events of Holy Week.

The Gospel writers devote between 1/3 and 1/6 of their books to the events of Holy Week (not including Easter Sunday), so there is plenty of material to reflect upon, and each of the Gospels has a distinctive voice. Here are the key events:

Palm Sunday – *The Triumphal Entry* (Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, John 12:12-19)

Holy Monday – *The Cleansing of the Temple* (Matthew 21:10-17, Mark 11:15-18, Luke 19:45-48)

Holy Tuesday – *Controversy & Parables* (Matthew 21:23-25:46, Mark 11:27-13:37, Luke 20:1-21:36)

Holy Wednesday – not mentioned in the Gospels

Maundy Thursday *The Last Supper* (Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-23, John 13:1-30)

Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-56, Mark:14:32-52, Luke 22:40-50, John 18:3-11)

Jesus before the Sanhedrin & Peter's denial (Matthew 26:57-75, Mark 14:53-72, Luke 22:67-71, John 18:12-27)

Good Friday *Jesus before Pilate & Herod* (Matthew 27:11-26, Mark 15:1-15, Luke 23:2-25, John 18:29-19:16)

The Crucifixion (Mathew 27:33-56, Mark 15:21-41, Luke 23:44-49, John 19:17-37)

The Burial of Jesus (Matthew 27:57-61, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56, John 19:38-42)

Holy Saturday *Guarding the tomb* (Matthew 27:62-66)

May we this Holy Week enter into the drama as we remember the week that changed history; from the love and devotion as perfume was lavished on to the feet of Jesus, to Jesus the servant who washed the feet of the disciples. From the Passover meal that is shared with disciples to the isolation of the cross. From the broken bread and poured wine, to the brokenness of Jesus on the cross. The agony, the torment, the crying out, the death. And then the despair, the hopelessness, the loneliness of Jesus laid in the sealed guarded tomb.

May we travel the road and encounter Jesus in all he endured.



1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our online Circuit Service which this week is led by Revd Nathan Falla and broadcast live from Charles Street

Find it on the 'Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit' YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>) why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email!

2. Zoom Opportunities

If you're feeling isolated, are not ready to be face to face yet, or can't, but are happy to meet on Zoom, there is a weekly coffee time at 3pm on a Monday run by Charles Street but open to all, email Mel Watson for more details: mellwatson42@gmail.com.

There is also still a weekly Zoom fellowship called 'The Gathering' which is part of Southwell Methodist Church and run by Philip and Francine Holmes. You'd be most welcome, contact Philip to connect: philipholmes8100@gmail.com.

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also [online](#).)
08:10am – 10th April

A Passion for Hospitality: What you didn't do for the least of these you didn't do for me.

On Palm Sunday, Andy Johnston, leads a service from Kings Community Church, Southampton, looking at the fickleness of hospitality. The crowds make a big fuss of Jesus when he makes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but abandon him less than a week later.

4. Radio Nottingham

Listen every Sunday, at 8am, to a live church service on BBC Radio Nottingham. (Online or on 95.1-103.8 MHz FM for free.)

Responding to the King

Online Circuit Service Sermon | Revd Nathan Falla

Readings: Luke 19:28-40 & Luke 23:1-25

Throughout Jesus' ministry when people tried to draw attention to him, he would often say "don't tell anyone," "my time hasn't come," it feels like Jesus is wanting everything to happen at the right time. But in the triumphal entry it feels like Jesus has gone to great efforts to orchestrate a processional drama, or an enthronement scene. Jesus arranged for a colt, an unriden donkey symbolizing purity and peace. The crowd waved branches as an acknowledgment of his authority. They threw down their cloaks to cover the road to usher the prince into their midst. They shouted the traditional welcome to a new king: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Given Jesus' earlier reticence to declare who he was, in this he was practically shouting "Here I am, your king, your prince of peace, your saviour." And the crowd heard it, loudly and clearly. That is why they shouted back, "Hosanna!" which means, "Save us."

However, the people who gathered weren't the only ones who heard. Some of the Pharisees didn't like what they heard. "Keep it down!" they shouted to the self-professed king on a colt. "Shut them up, or there will be trouble." They had one eye looking down their noses with contempt at the rabble, and the other was cast over their shoulders in fear of Rome who didn't like any disturbance that they didn't cause.

Luke's memory of this event is different from the other Gospel writers. Luke leaves out the "Hosannas" that Matthew, Luke and John record. However, Luke is the only one who records this curious response to the Pharisees plea to keep quiet. "I tell you," says Jesus, "if these were silent, the stones would shout out!" The necessity of praise is how one commentator describes it, the absolute necessity of praise. When it is time, it is time. The purposes of God will be fulfilled, the only question is, "Will we join in or get out of the way?"

Contrasting these events with Good Friday it feels like Jesus is being pushed from pillar to post as Pilate sends him to Herod, and Herod sends him back to Pilate. Reading Luke's account it really feels that Pilate does not want to get involved, although he would be content to have him punished before he is released. It is the crowd who are insistent; they demand for the release of Barabbas (who was in prison for insurrection and murder) and then they call for Jesus to be crucified. They shout so loudly that Pilate grants their demand, and Jesus walks the road to Calvary.

What happened to the crowd? Were they stirred up? Did Jesus quickly fall out of favour for the welcome seen on Palm Sunday to be turned to "kill him" on Good Friday? Were they even the same crowd? We just don't know. But we do know is how people change, how people can take offence at the slightest of things which harm a relationship. At the end of the day any of these explanations are plausible but it really doesn't matter, what matters is what Jesus did for you and for me.

From Jesus' entry into Jerusalem we can see that there are similarities with the arrival of a king or a military hero, as the streets were lined with people,

and cloaks and palms were laid on the floor to form what could be similar to the red carpet which celebrities walk on as they arrive at premiers or award ceremonies today. But Jesus was not arriving as a king, well at least not as a king as the Jews were expecting. The Jews were expecting a military Messiah or hero to save them from Roman occupation, who would lead them into victory, riding on a noble horse, but what they got was Jesus riding in on a humble donkey. The victory would not be against Rome, but it would be against the wrongs that you and I have done, and it would not come through a glorious battle but it would be through the pain, suffering and shame of the cross. This would be the way that Jesus would bring us back to God.

Our readings present us with a challenge, two responses to Jesus of either accepting him or rejecting him; welcoming him as king or shouting crucify him. In our day to day lives there are things that we say, think, and do which bring honour and glory to God who has created us and loves us, and there are equally those things that we say think and do which hurt God, and other people, denying us the relationship with God that we were designed for. In the apostle's Paul's words, we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. When we fail to demonstrate God's love to others, we deny him. When we fail to speak out for the oppressed, we deny him. When we fail to speak out for what is wrong and immoral, we deny him. When we fail to listen to his call and go our own way, we deny him. We have been called to be the hands, feet and mouth of Jesus Christ within the world, to love the unlovable, to touch the untouchable, and when we do not, we deny him, we crucify him.

God desires us to be in a relationship, a living relationship not just on a Sunday, but every minute of every day, to live for Jesus, to have Christ centred lives, lives focused on prayer and study, lives where Jesus is our number one priority, lives that overflow with God's love and grace that we may be infectious wherever we go. Lives where Jesus is King.

In all this there is hope. For when we fail, when we deny or reject God there is a way back through Jesus. Because of God's love for each of us Jesus came into this world: In John 3:16 we read "For God so loved the world" that includes you and me "that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life".

Max Lucado writes: "How wide is God's love? Wide enough for the whole world. Are you included in the world? Then you are included in God's love. It's nice to be included. You aren't always. Universities exclude you if you aren't smart enough. Businesses exclude you if you aren't good enough. But though they may exclude you, Christ includes you. When asked to describe the width of his love, he stretched one hand to the right and the other to the left and had them nailed in that position so you would know he died loving you.

Do we accept that love, do we accept that Jesus died for us that we may know the fullness of a relationship with God, God who is faithful and loving. This Holy Week are we going to accept or reject Jesus, will you shout crucify?

Prayer Space

Lord Jesus,
the disciples accompanied you into
Jerusalem, proclaiming you the king
who comes in the name of the Lord:
the Messiah – God's anointed on earth,
the one who does deeds of power,
the one to save Israel.

Jesus, God with us,
you accompany us in our daily living.
We welcome you as the one
who comes in the name of the Lord:
God's Word made flesh,
making sense of our lives
with the power of God, who is love
that the world might be saved
through you.

Jesus, bringer of peace, revealer of glory,
lead us into this holy week.
May we remember your story,
renew our commitment,
witness to your love
and follow your way. Amen.

Simon Walking

With shouts of joy and jubilation the crowd
announced your triumphal entry to the city
fill your Church with these praises
that we may proclaim your love
and keep us steadfast in times of trouble
and peace.

With shouts of anger and hatred
the crowd called for your death.
Strengthen the hand of all who lead
not to abuse their power...
Preserve us from injustice.

With shouts of horror and defiance your
disciples swore allegiance and loyalty.
Give courage to all whose fidelity is tested
against popularity...
Save us from betrayal and deceit.

With shouts of anguish and terror
frightened friends looked on powerless.
Be with all who stare into the darkness of
anxiety...
Shine the light of your hope to illumine the
shadows of despair.

With shouts of grief and desolation your
mother and closest companions
received your lifeless body.
Be alongside all who weep by the body of
one they love....
Bring us to the joy that comes with the first
light of the new day. Amen.

Ian Black

Hymns and worship songs

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service:

Triumphal Entry & Praise is rising – StF 64, SOF 2007

There's a man riding in on a donkey

My song is love unknown – StF 277, SOF 400

When love came down to earth – SOF 1608

At the foot of the cross – SOF 1180

Ride on, ride on in majesty – StF 265, SOF 485

Please click on the song title to access YouTube clip of each song.

Discussion Questions

Church is best done together but we know that this isn't always possible - particularly if you're housebound, isolated or even shielding. But why not contact a friend and arrange to watch the church service online or read the newsletter simultaneously and get in touch by telephone afterwards to talk about it. Below are some questions that might help you to reflect together!

1. What is the biggest crowd that you have been in? Did you feel safe?
2. Why do you think the crowd responded to Jesus so differently on Palm Sunday and Good Friday?
3. Have you experienced a crowd changing its mind? What was it like
4. How is Jesus seen in the way you live your life? Have there been times when you have denied him?

Holy Week Worship

Mon, 7pm | Prayer & Praise at Hope, Barnbygate

Maundy Thursday

7pm, Communion & Tenebrae at Hope, Barnbygate

7pm, Communion & Tenebrae at Southwell

7.30pm Communion at Balderton

Good Friday

10am, Worship at Collingham

10am, Worship at Hope, Barnbygate

6pm, Worship at Long Bennington

7pm, *Reflections at the Cross* at Charles St & online

7pm, United Service at Sutton-on-Trent

7.30pm, Worship at Balderton

In person worship across the Circuit during the next four weeks...

March - May 2022		10th Apr 6th of Lent Palm Sunday	17th Apr Easter Day	24th Apr 2nd of Easter	1st May 3rd of Easter
Balderton	8:30 am		Bates HC		
	10:30 am	Gibson HC	LA	Ward T	K Trowbridge
	6:00 pm				
Charles Street	8:30 am		Falla HC		
	10:30 am	Falla	Mathews	LA	A Trowbridge
	6:00 pm	Bates	Falla HC	Falla	Gibson
Collingham	10:45 am	Bates US	Bates HC	Pearce	Hall
Elston	10:45 am	Hardy	Hibberts HC / 2pm	at Long Bennington JS / 10.30am	
Hope Community	10:30 am	Winnington Breakfast at H'ville / 9am	Falla HC / at B'gate	Falla at B'gate	Gibson at B'gate
Long Bennington	10:30 am	Morley	Hucknall T / HC	Hibberts JS	LA
North End	6:00 pm	Falla	Bates HC	Hart	Mathews
North Muskham	10:30 am	Hibberts	Hibberts at the Riverside HC / 7.30 am	Dalby T	
	2:00 pm				Falla Café
Southwell	10:30 am	Ward T	Hibberts HC	Hart	Falla
	Other	Hibberts PicC / 2pm		Hibberts Fringe / 6pm	Adams 4pm
Sutton-on-Trent	10:30 am	LA Breakfast / 9am	US at Parish Church HC / 11am	Hardy US	Winnington

For full plan, visit the Circuit Website:

<https://www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk/newsroom/march-may-plan.html>

or contact your local church



Easter Communion

Easter Day tends to be the one Sunday in the year where Holy Communion is celebrated by every church family in the circuit. If you are not attending face-to face church, the Ministers would like to offer you home Communion.

If you would like to take this offer up please contact your Minister so that appropriate arrangements can be made so that you can receive Communion in the Easter season:

Revd Nathan Falla – 07930 396813

Revd Peter Bates – 01636 706264

Revd Peter Hibberts – 07561 665585