

## **Palm Sunday 2023**

### **Matthew 21:1-11 "The Return of the King"**

#### **Read Matthew 21:1-11.**

1. This story is very familiar to many people. Does anything about it strike you in a new way this time?

#### **For comparison, read Mark 11:1-10.**

2. Each of the gospel writers chose to emphasise different things in their stories. What are some of the differences you see between Matthew's telling of the Triumphal entry and Mark's? Do you think all of the differences are relevant? Why or why not?
3. In the sermon Karen showed how Matthew is using the word 'stirred up' (v10) to reference earthquakes. Some other places he uses the same word are: Matt 8:24; Matt 27:51-53; Matt 27:54; Matt 28:2; Matt 28:4. Each of these is unique to Matthew's gospel. Why do you think he chose these places to use the word 'earthquake'?
4. Karen suggested in her sermon that the use of earthquakes is linked to the Day of the Lord, and that Matthew is intentionally making this connection. The prophets use this phrase to refer both to the end times and also to other times when God acts in salvation and judgment. Why do you think Matthew used earthquake imagery for the triumphal entry in particular?

#### **Read Zech 9:9-10 and Zech 14:1-9.**

5. Why did Jesus choose these prophecies in particular to enact? What do you think his purpose was in intentionally 'declaring' himself in this way?

#### **Karen quoted this prayer in her sermon, and invited us to acknowledge Jesus' kingship in our lives by bringing all of ourselves to him in surrender:**

"Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me." (St Ignatius of Loyola)

6. Did you fast from anything during Lent? If so, reflect on the experience as it relates to this prayer. Would you say that the experience of fasting helps you pray this prayer more authentically? Why or why not?

#### **For deeper study: Read Hebrews 12:18-29.**

7. Some of the ways Matthew uses earthquakes is to describe people's reaction to God. How does this passage from Hebrews connect to what Matthew is doing with earthquakes and the Day of the Lord?