



Kirknewton and East Calder Parish Church of Scotland

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Contemporary Lesson: Rev A J Groenewald

I do not like crowds. As a cluster phobic it makes me feel as if I cannot breath. In a crowd it almost feels as if you cease to exist. It is as if another persona takes hold of you and that you instantly follow the people around you. I think the same was true of the crowd that welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem. There must have been all kinds of people in the crowd:

- the ones who did not like crowds but were caught up by the sudden gathering;
- there must have been pregnant woman who struggled to walk;
- there must have been mothers and fathers who wondered about this Jesus;
- there must have been the younger teenagers who wanted a revolution to overthrow the power of the Roman authorities;
- there must have been people who previously were healed by Jesus.

When I read this passage I can just imagine the tension that was so visible in the streets, marketplace, and houses of Jerusalem in that first century.

The Jews in Jerusalem were part of the Roman Empire and were not allowed to govern themselves. They had to pay heavy taxes to their “so called” powerless non Jewish king Herod and to the Caesar of Rome. The Roman authorities did everything in their power to suppress the Jews. They did not tolerate anyone who could overthrow their power. The Romans knew of the constant threat of a rebellion by the Jews and were afraid of any event that could be the spark of it!

So I can just imagine that the Romans were very suspicious of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Different people had different expectations of Jesus.

I think ordinary citizens were so tired of all the tensions that existed, that they hoped Jesus could bring them earthly peace. They hoped that Jesus would be like David and overthrow the authority of Rome and Herod.

Mothers and wives were thinking of a new war that could emerge and of losing their sons and husbands.

The children thought of nothing else than a great day out with their parents and of waving palm branches.

The business merchants thought only of how much money they would make selling goods to the crowds of people that gathered to welcome Jesus.

The religious leaders, funnily enough, were thinking of how they could use Jesus to fit their own agendas.

The soldiers were ready to act in the interest of Rome,

The spies of king Herod could not wait to tell him everything that happened

The animal lovers thought only of the donkey...

But in a crowd you do not think. When everyone around you shouts “Hosanna” you shout as hard as you can too.

If this was us, how would the scene look?

I am sure there will be the so-called “green people” who would love the fact that Jesus is saving the carbon footprint by riding on a donkey.

The child protection unit would be close to watch if Jesus touches any children in the crowd

Health and safety procedures would be implemented to make sure no one gets hurt by the branches of the trees, most probably they would have discouraged anyone to spread them on the road!

To be honest - I think something like this would be cancelled in our day because of all the so-called dangers.

And most probably we will not be so open to shout “Hosanna” to Jesus in our society and villages. We are too afraid that we will offend anyone. We are so ashamed that our friends might think we are weak. We are so unfaithful to publicly announce that we are Jesus’ followers!

Most of us will only shout “Hosanna” in the safety and comfort of a church building where only other faithful followers can hear us.

If we choose to shout “Hosanna” today we must be faithful to Jesus till the end of our journeys on earth. But we must not only praise him on Sundays in the comfort

of church buildings. No we must publicly confess everywhere we go with everything in our power that Jesus is our only saviour, that He is worthy of all our praise and thanksgiving.

In our villages we must shout “hosanna” in the meeting halls, in all the gathering places, in the shops, when we meet with people on the streets, at the Gala day, and at the school meetings in such a way that we honour God’s redemption through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

May this Easter be the time that we start to mobilise as a Christian following in our communities, a crowd that is worth listening to, a crowd that is living the faith in Jesus Christ!

Amen