

Reading: Matthew 21:1-11 (NT page 988-989)

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

So, children - today is a special day. On this day we celebrate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. When Jesus entered Jerusalem it was like a huge party. All the people were so excited because they expected that Jesus would take away their very cruel King and his bosses and He would rule over them. They thought by themselves that this Jesus was their only hope to have a peaceful life without paying too much money for taxes and the rest.

So now I would like to show you how the people felt having all their expectations.

Do you have expectations say, for instance, when you go to a birthday party? Let's see...

So, children, are you excited...but please tell us what do you usually get at a party? Because what you expect is what you got previously? So cool drink, let's see? Will you drink this? No, it is a bit disappointing... oh and party bags, full of sweeties and maybe a toy? So open yours... show us what you got? What do you think? Are you disappointed? Why? Because you did not get what you expected....

So this same feeling of disappointment soon appeared in the hearts of the people who cheered Jesus, because Jesus did not chase away the King and He did not march into Jerusalem with soldiers... Just a few days later, they were so disappointed that Jesus was not the man they wanted him to be. So they crucified Him (give out palm crosses), but then the big surprise – after three days, He overpowered death and appeared to a few people. He told them that He was part of God's plan, to establish the heavenly kingdom for all the believers. And I think for the first time they realised who Jesus really was. Jesus was their Saviour, who took away all their badness and gave them a new life. So our story has a very good ending. And to illustrate this, I brought you nice fairy cakes...I hope you enjoy them and as you eat them remember the Easter story with the good ending!

Now will you please sit here quietly in front of the Communion Table eating your fairy cakes, while I address the rest of the congregation?

Reflection

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.

I do not like crowds. As a claustrophobic, it makes me feel as if I cannot breathe. In a crowd it almost feels as if you stop 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.

Different people with different expectations....

- 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 and her colt...

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 from spreading 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 would not be so open as 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