

The Lord Needs You



Canonbie United & Liddesdale 13th April 2014

Order of Service

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Call to worship Hosanna!

Hosanna! Let us cry Hosanna!
For the Lord has entered our world
Let us praise him
Hosanna! Let us cry Hosanna!
For the Lord has entered this place
Let us worship him
Hosanna! Let us cry Hosanna!
For the Lord has entered our hearts
Let us rejoice and lift our voices in song

Hymn

CH4 365 Ride On! Ride On In Majesty

Ride on, ride on, in majesty!
Hark! all the tribes Hosanna cry;
O Saviour meek, pursue Thy road
With palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on, in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die!
O Christ! Thy triumph now begin
Over captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on, in majesty!
The wingèd squadrons of the sky
Look down with sad and wondering eyes
To see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on, in majesty!
Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;
The Father, on His sapphire throne,
Expects His own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on, in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,
Then take, O God, Thy power, and reign.

Approach

Gates Of Jerusalem

Lord God, our Father in Heaven
At the gates of Jerusalem they welcomed your son
They through palm leaves at his feet
They threw their cloaks upon the ground
And so we would welcome you
We are gathered in your presence at the gates of Jerusalem
We are gathered to praise you
For you have loved us from the beginning of time
You have taught us of justice and truth and dignity
You have opened up to us the prospect of life eternal with you
You came to us - entered into your own creation - in Jesus, your son
At the gates of Jerusalem they welcomed him
And so we fling open the gates of our hearts to welcome you
And yet....
At the gates of Jerusalem they welcomed your son
But in the days that followed they turned away
In the days to come shouts of "Hosanna" became cries of "Crucify him!"
And sometimes we turn away
We turn away from you and do our own thing, rather than serve
We fulfil our own selfish desires
We turn away from each other and become indifferent
Indifferent to poverty and injustice
Indifferent to bigotry and inequality
Sometimes, in anger and hatred, we cry "Crucify!"
Forgive us.....

Lord God our Father in Heaven
At the gates of Jerusalem they welcomed your son
He entered the city and they cried Hosanna
Come enter our hearts and renew us
Come speak to our minds and guide us
Come touch our souls and inspire us
So that in all we think and say and do
We may cry Hosanna and remain with your Son

Who walks before us and guides us

Address**The Donkey**

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

G.K.Chesterton

Address

Welcoming Christ

Suppose somebody really famous was coming to Canonbie. What do you think they'd do to welcome him? Do you think people would be out on the streets?

What would they be doing?

<Flags>

<Bunting>

<Pipe band music>

But suppose someone you really loved was coming to visit. How would you welcome them?

<Improvise>

Jesus comes to us all. He comes to our hearts and to our minds. We can welcome him by doing what he wants us to do - caring for one another and putting other people first

Hymn

CH4 367 Hosanna! Loud Hosanna

Hosanna, loud hosanna,
the little children sang,
through city street and temple
their joyful welcome rang.
They shouted out their praises,
to Christ, the children's friend,
who welcomes all with blessing,
whose love will never end.

From Olivet they followed
a large exultant crowd,
the victor palm branch waving,
and chanting clear and loud;
bright angels joined the chorus,
beyond the cloudless sky,
'Hosanna in the highest!
Glory to God on high!'

"Hosanna in the highest!"
That ancient song we sing,
for Christ is our Redeemer,
the Lord of heaven our King.
Oh, may we ever praise him
with heart and life and voice,
and in his blissful presence
eternally rejoice.

Reading(s): Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!
Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD.

The LORD is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you.
O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Matthew 21:1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them.

A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

From Heaven you came helpless babe
Entered our world, your glory veiled
Not to be served, but to serve
And give your life that we might live
*This is our God, the servant king
He calls us now to follow him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the servant king*

There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
Yet “Not my will, but yours” he said

Come see his hands and his feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we are serving

Intercession

Burdened

Lord, to those who are burdened

May we carry your love

Lord, when your son came to Jerusalem
When the crowds gathered to welcome him
He arrived, carried by a donkey
And went on to teach, to heal and to give himself for all
In his name we offer our prayers

Lord, to those who are burdened

In Jerusalem your son brought healing
And we pray for all who need healing today
Those who are burdened by pains of the body -
We pray for the sick, and people in pain
Those who are burdened by pains of the heart
We pray for the bereaved, and those who are lonely
Those who are burdened by pains of the soul
We pray for those who feel lost and abandoned

Lord, to those who are burdened

In Jerusalem your son taught about wealth and poverty
And we pray for those who are in need
Those who are burdened by hunger
We pray that all may be fed
Those who are burdened by homelessness -
We pray that all may have shelter
Those who are burdened by slavery
We pray for freedom

Lord, to those who are burdened

In Jerusalem your son spoke of living and dying by the sword
And we pray for the victims of power and anger
Those who are burdened by hatred
We pray for the victims of want and bigotry

Those who are burdened by power
We pray for the exploited and the prisoners of conscience
Those who are burdened by violence
We pray for those caught up in crime and violence
Lord, to those who are burdened

In Jerusalem your son overturned the tables of the moneychangers
May we, your church, be ready to overturn tables
Upsetting complacency and conventions
Until those in pain are relieved of their burdens
Until the victims of greed and poverty are relieved of their burdens
Until the victims of power are relieved of their burdens
We ask you for the strength and compassion your son displayed
Lord, to those who are burdened

This we ask in the name of your son
Who came to Jerusalem not for his own sake
But for the needs of all.
In his name we ask
Lord, to those who are burdened

Offering

Palm Sunday

Our Lord, our Father, our God.

Today we thank you for the moments of joy

For the days that live brightly in memory

Times of triumph and times of joy; days of hope and days of dreams.

Today we thank you that in times of sadness

You have promised that you will never leave us.

That through pain, suffering and loneliness,

We know you have been there before us.

We thank you for friends and family; for love and life.

We thank you for home and food; the wonders of the created world.

Especially today we cry 'Hosanna' to our Lord

And rejoice that the Messiah has come to his own throne - our hearts.

Where our forebears laid palm leaves at his feet we lay this offering.

It is but the smallest fraction of all that you have given us.

We ask that it be a token of lives dedicated to you,

And that it be used for your work in the world

For the building of your church

And for the bringing in of your kingdom.

Hymn

CH4 522 The Church Is Wherever

THE Church is wherever God's people are praising,
Singing their thanks for joy on this day.
The Church is wherever disciples of Jesus
Remember his story and walk in his way.

The Church is wherever God's people are helping,
Caring for neighbours in sickness and need.
The Church is wherever God's people are sharing
The words of the Bible in gift and in deed.

The Church is wherever God's people are seeking
to reach out and touch folk wherever they are --
conveying the Gospel, its joy and its comfort,
to challenge, refresh, and excite and inspire.

The Church is wherever God's people are praising,
knowing we're wanted and loved by our Lord.
The Church is where we as Christ's followers are trying
to live and to share out the good news of God.

If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” (Matthew 21:3)

We stayed a couple of days last week with my Mum and Dad. One night they were sharing that conversation all married couples have every so often after they’ve been together for a few years. That’s the conversation about what is useful to keep about the house and what can be gotten rid of. On this occasion the target was my Dad’s toolbox, which isn’t exactly small, but is kept in the garage. In it’s defence my Dad did say that it contained several pieces of aluminium. I did refrain from asking what use he thought these pieces of aluminium might have; partly because we men have to stick together on these things, but partly because we’ve all been there, haven’t we? We’ve put boys and pieces away because we think they might come in useful and when it comes to the possibility we might throw them away we live in mortal dread that just days after throwing them away they might be needed.

But how do we decide what is useful and what is not? How can we decide what is necessary and what isn’t. Especially, how do we decide what God would find useful. what God might need? I found myself wondering about this when I read the passage from Matthew where two of Jesus’s disciples go into the village to acquire a donkey and its colt. They are told, if anyone asks them why they are taking them, to say, “The Lord needs them”. It’s an interesting verb - not “wants”, or “desires”: “needs”. In the next few hours that donkey - a useful animals in its own right, no doubt - would be sanctified to God’s own purpose - the Lord would need them.

And if a donkey can be useful to God, if God can have need of one, then what else might come in handy for God? Well, all sorts of stuff. At one point in the Gospel of John a little earth and mud became part of Jesus’s miraculous healing of a blind man - the most commonplace, most ordinary material became, in Christ’s hands, part of a miracle. Perhaps most remarkable, a while earlier, a

young lad had given Jesus two fish and a few loaves of bread. These most commonplace of foodstuffs became, in Christ's hands, food enough for five thousand. On the night before he was arrested, Jesus took bread and wine. These were the most staple parts of a meal, but in Christ's hands they became the most powerful symbols of salvation we have in the Christian church. The most unlikely of things can become, in God's hands, useful to God's purpose. It doesn't matter how small or apparently useless something may appear; if God has need of it it can be used to his purpose.

And if this is true of donkeys and mud; if it is true of loaves and fishes; if it is true of bread and wine, how much more true might it be for human beings? One of the most striking things about the Bible is the way God uses the most likely of people to serve his purpose. If you think God only picks spiritual superheroes or the pure and the good to do his work, a read through of the book of Judges ought to put you right. From the ranks of liars and adulterers, of murderers and cheats God has called people when he needed them. It wasn't their holiness - or lack of it that mattered; but God's.

There is a temptation in religion sometimes to try and draw a line between the sacred and the profane; between things which are holy and things which are unholy; between things which are spiritual and things which are worldly. Some of this comes from a misunderstanding of some of Paul's writings. Some of it, perhaps, from a sense of unworthiness before God which is understandable but which can be pushed too far. Whatever, the case, I suggest to you that such an idea misses the whole point of Christianity.

In Christ God came into the world - into the world with all its profanities, all its unholiness, all its worldliness. He used the most ordinary of things to do his work. Sometimes he called to himself the most unlikely of people. This was part and parcel of what God has always done. In the Christian faith God is not some kind of flash magician who just snaps his divine fingers and makes things happen; he doesn't fling lightning bolts at people; he doesn't - most of the time - act through the miraculous and the unearthly. Most of the time - the vast majority of the time - God works through the everyday laws of nature that he devised. Most of the time he makes a difference in the world through human beings - sometimes the least likely of human beings

“The Lord needs them”, the disciples were instructed to answer if they were challenged about the donkey and the colt. “The Lord needs”. The idea of God “needing” something or someone might seem odd, but it is part and parcel of the way God chooses to work in the world. He works through people - often ordinary people like you and me. Does God need you? Does he have something for you to do? Why not? If God can need a donkey, if he can have a task for a donkey’s colt to perform, then why not you? Why not any of us?

Aye, but what? When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem he didn’t spend the days that followed in secluded spiritual withdrawal or even, probably, in lengthy acts of worship with long sermons. He moved among the crowds like any other human being. But he talked about what he believed. He offered healing and support where he could. He spoke up loudly and boldly in the face of things he believed to be wrong. In the days that followed - days that weren’t wall-to-wall miracles - Jesus showed us what God can use us for.

We too can get out among the crowds - among the people we work with or the social groups we mix with and talk about what we believe. There are opportunities to do that - there are plenty of folk out there more than happy to diss religion in the expectation that no none will challenge them. We can offer support and healing where we can - an sometimes the most important acts of healing are those that surround people with love and care and thoughtfulness when they’re hurting. There are opportunities to do that too - I’m sure you all know someone who’s in need of a reminder that they matter. We can speak up boldly and strongly against things that are wrong. There are, to be sure, plenty of opportunities to do that. We don’t exactly live in a perfect world - we live in a country where some people blow more on a night out than others have to feed themselves for a month.

Christianity is not some spiritualised faith whose concerns are on some different plain. It is a faith in which God entered his creation and mingled with ordinary people with ordinary needs and concerns, and spoke to and addressed those needs and concerns. He did it in the life of a human being - a human being who could and would suffer and die like any other. And he does it still - through the least likely of people sometimes. It can be an uncomfortable thought, perhaps, but I believe for all of us there are times when, if we listen, we will hear, “The Lord has need of you”. If we’re tempted too think, “What, me? No - can’t be me.

I'm not good enough, not special enough, not talented enough" maybe we should think to ourselves: if Jesus could say "The Lord has need of them" about a donkey and a colt, then why not us?

Lord sometimes we forget that you can use the most ordinary of things an people and do remarkable things with them. Take us and use us in your service.

Hymn

CH4 498 Angel Voices Ever Singing

Angel voices ever singing
round your throne of light,
angel harps for ever ringing,
rest not day nor night;
thousands only live to bless you
and confess you
Lord of might.

Lord we know your heart rejoices
in each work of thine;
you did ears and hands and voices
for your praise design;
craftsman's art and music's measure
for your pleasure
all combine.

In your house our gifts we offer
from your love so free;
and for your acceptance proffer
all unworthily,
hearts and minds and hands and voices
in our choicest
psalmody.

Honour, glory, might, and merit
yours shall ever be,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
blessèd Trinity.
Earth and heaven join in praising,
voices raising
joyfully.

Benediction

Carry Christ

Go now to carry Christ

Carry him in your heart as he carries you

Carry the love of God

Share it with all you meet

Carry God's Holy Spirit within you

Let it shine in your words and your deeds