

Daily Readings

Week 6 - Journey into Hearing

Beginning Sunday 5th April with

Jesus enters Jerusalem

Luke 19:28-44 Psalm 118. 1; 19-end

Theme of the week:

Learning to hear and pay attention to God's Word prepares us to follow God

Monday 6 April

Hearing the cry of Hosanna

Matthew 21:1-9

²When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying 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. ³If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.' ⁴This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

⁵'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.'

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The 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!'

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When Jesus came into Jerusalem for the last time he was greeted by cries of jubilation and excitement, shouts of welcome and praise. He is surrounded by adulation and the shouts of expectation and joy. But such excitement and expectation can be a very fickle thing, quickly whipped up but just as quickly turned away.

Question for reflection:

How do you think Jesus felt when he heard the praise and adulation?

Tuesday 7 April

Hearing the cry of betrayal

Matthew 26:40-50

⁴⁰Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour?' ⁴¹Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' ⁴²Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' ⁴³Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.' ⁴⁹At once he came up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you are here to do.' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

How does this passage relate to the theme?

Jesus has heard promises from his disciples that they will never leave him and will follow him to death, but in this passage, he hears the sounds of weakness and betrayal. Jesus goes to pray and hopes his disciples will watch and pray with him, united in their focus on the Father. But when Jesus comes back to the disciples, he hears only the breathing sounds of their sleeping. They have already begun to separate from him, leaving him alone with his prayers. Finally, Jesus meets Judas who betrays him with a friendly greeting and a kiss. These words signal not the solidarity of a friend coming to help, but betrayal and arrest.

Question for reflection:

How do you think Jesus felt when he heard Judas' words?

Wednesday 8 April

Hearing the cry of denial

Matthew 26:69-75

⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, 'You also were with Jesus the Galilean.' ⁷⁰But he denied it before all of them, saying, 'I do not know what you are talking about.' ⁷¹When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, 'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.' ⁷²Again he denied it with an oath, 'I do not know the man.' ⁷³After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, 'Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.' ⁷⁴Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, 'I do not know the man!' At that moment the cock crowed. ⁷⁵Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: 'Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly.

How does this passage relate to the theme?

In this passage, what is heard is Peter denying that he was a friend of Jesus. His words separate him from Jesus as he speaks to save himself and leave Jesus to his fate. It is noticeable that he speaks coarsely and roughly, cursing and swearing in an attempt to stop people asking him the question he desperately does not want to be asked. And finally, Peter hears the worst voice of all, - the memory of the gentle voice of Jesus telling him that he will fail the test, and deny his friendship with Jesus.

Question for reflection:

What do you think people hear when you speak about Jesus with others?

Thursday 9 April

Hearing the cry of Crucify

(Maundy Thursday) Matthew 27:20-26

²⁰Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' ²²Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' ²³Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

²⁴So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' ²⁵Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' ²⁶So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

How does this passage relate to the theme?

As we approach Good Friday, we recall that the crowds who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem with cries of joy and praise, are now shouting the very opposite. The crowds are now angry and violent and are screaming for crucifixion. The welcome of life and hope now becomes the curse of death and rejection. So powerful and insistent is the cry of crucify that Jesus is handed over to be flogged and sent to his death.

Question for reflection:

How do you think Jesus felt when he heard the cry of 'Crucify'?