



Worldwide Church of God
Camberwell
Living and sharing the Gospel

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Dear Church Family,

Have you ever noticed how much we all prepare for things in life?

An athlete will prepare with a lengthy programme of bends and stretches before they compete. Very often the preparation is longer than the event itself.

Before a plane takes off a series of different checks and rechecks are performed in preparation for the flight.

And how many of us prepare to face the day ahead with our early morning dose of caffeine?

Well over the past few weeks we have been working our way through the Lord's Prayer in preparation for Easter, so that we can approach this most important time of the year in a prayerful, humble way.

With that foundation laid there are three particular areas that I would like us to prayerfully consider in preparation for the commemorations and celebrations that we are to undertake during Holy Week.

They can all be found during the activities recorded on Palm Sunday – Here they are:

1. Do what Jesus says

As Jesus approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives he,

'...sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." ...The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.' (Matthew 21:13, 6).

This is a strange little mission. I wonder what these two disciples talked about on the way? If it had been me, I'd have probably been saying,

"Do you really think we should just untie the donkey and take it?"

"Do you think the Master knows the owner?"

"Will they just let us walk off with their donkey?"

You see, we often read the Bible like a play, as if all the characters knew the script and how things were going to turn out. But they didn't. These two disciples didn't know what was going to happen, but they simply did what Jesus said to do.

The result being that their simple obedience brought glory to God.

As Jesus sat on the donkey and rode into Jerusalem,

*'The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,
"Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9)*

This is a good model for us as we approach Easter. We could do no better than to follow the example of those two disciples who though they had no way to know what the future would hold and what their actions would bring about simply obeyed.

I doubt our obedience is going to involve a donkey, and quite probably only you and God know what it will involve.

Is Jesus calling you to repentance and faith in him? To make a decision to follow Him?

Is He telling you to:

- Forgive someone?
- Help someone?
- Give something up?
- Take something on?

Only you will be able to answer these questions. But whatever it is, remember what His mother told the servants at the wedding in Cana:

"...Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:5)

And as we do so we'll be amazed how our simple act of obedience will bring glory to God.

2. Feel what Jesus feels

*'As [Jesus] approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it'
(Luke 19:41)*

The Greek word that is translated "wept" here signifies more than tears; it suggests the kind of soul-wracking, gut-wrenching sobbing that a person does at the tomb of a friend.

In fact, it is the word used of Mary's crying at the tomb of her brother Lazarus, of Mary Magdalene's tears at Jesus' tomb, and of Peter's "bitter" weeping after he denied Jesus and heard the cock crow.

And here Jesus wept violently for the people of Jerusalem. Not for himself, not for the cross that awaited him, but for the fate that would come upon that city.

Rather than the joyful shouts and praises that resounded all around, Jesus heard the screams, the cries, the shrieks and groans of the men, women, and children who would die in that city when the Roman general Titus would invade in 70 AD and raze the city, destroy the temple, and brutalize the people.

While everyone was having a party, Jesus was filled with compassion for the lost sheep of Israel who didn't even know their own sad condition.

That, too, is a good model for you and me this week before Easter.

We could do no better to prepare for the events we look to at Holy Week than by letting ourselves feel what Jesus feels, by allowing our hearts be broken for:

- Those who are hurting;
- Those who are wandering;
- Those who are searching;
- Those who don't even know they're searching.

It might be a relative, a friend, a colleague at work, a neighbour who hasn't yet experienced the forgiveness, the deliverance, the peace, the freedom that comes when you experience new life through faith in Jesus Christ.

If we let ourselves feel what Jesus feels it will bring a flood of compassion into our hearts.

3. Tell who Jesus is

*'When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked,
"Who is this?"*

*The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in
Galilee" (Matthew 21:10-11).*

When Matthew reports that the city was "stirred," he uses the word from which we get our word "seismic." It's the same word he used later in his Gospel, in 27:51, where he said that at the moment Jesus died on the cross,

'...The earth shook and the rocks split.' (Matthew 27:51).

The city was stirred as an earthquake "stirs" the ground. That's what happens when people begin doing what Jesus says and feeling what Jesus feels.

And it led to the people asking,

"What's going on?"

"What's this about?"

"Who is this?"

The answer is straightforward - "This is Jesus."

Again we could do no better to prepare for Easter than to tell who Jesus is.

Is there is someone around you who is sincerely wondering, “Who is this?” They honestly don’t know, but they’re willing to find out.

If so, why not invite them to church to find out who this Jesus is.

Do you know that surveys indicate the majority of people when asked why they don’t attend church, give the same reason? They say, “No one ever asked.”

Perhaps this Easter is the time to ask.

So here’s the mission for us, if we would prepare for Easter in a way that will bring a smile to God’s face:

1. Do what Jesus says;
2. Feel what Jesus feels; and
3. Tell who Jesus is.

Will we take up the challenge?

With love in Jesus’ name,

Barry

Barry Robinson
Pastor