



# Southside Worship Online

28 March 2021 Preacher - David  
Fender

*To prepare yourself to worship, you are invited to spend a few minutes settling yourself into a comfortable space. Close your eyes. Slow your breathing. Become aware of what you can feel in and around your body – what you can hear, or feel, or smell. Acknowledge the distractions around and within you and bring them with you into worship. You may like to light a candle to help centre your thoughts toward the love and presence of the living God.*

## Welcome

We join together in one service this week. We will be focusing on the parade of Jesus as the King.

## Songs

*Our God*

*How Great Thou Art.*

## Prayer of confession

Sustainer of the weary,  
we know how we sang for joy when Christ came into our lives,  
and how we have not followed him when he leads us on this journey.  
We have hidden our faces from the pain and suffering of our world.  
We have turned a deaf ear to the cries of the poor, the hungry, the oppressed.  
We trust in the slick promotions of the world,  
and not in your words that can transform our lives.  
Forgive us, Steadfast God, and shine your face upon us.  
Help us to have the same mind as Christ,  
so we would know your promises;  
help us to have the same heart as Christ,  
so we might serve your children;  
help us to have the same Spirit as Christ,  
so we might go wherever you lead us.

## Song

*Waymaker*

## Offering

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,  
the glory, the splendour, and the majesty;

for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

All things come from you,

and of your own do we give you.

We thank you for all you have given to us, and we

give you our gifts that they may be used

to share your love with others.

### **Prayers of intercession**

This will be the prayers of some of our children from JAFFA club. You might like to think about the needs in the world which you would pray for.

**Bible Reading**                Luke 19:29 – 44

**Song**                                *Jesus Messiah*

### **Benediction**

May you recognise Jesus who comes as king, a king who brings peace to the world.

### **Sermon**

Imagine, you're watching the very first Palm Sunday parade, on TV. You have seen crowds cheering, people waving palm branches and laying their cloaks on the ground. You've seen Pharisees looking angry and Roman soldiers alert and anxious. And then in the middle of this cheering crowd, there is a man riding a donkey. Seeking to understand all this, your 2 favourite commentators, David Koch and Natalie Barr, are joined by one of Jesus' followers.

DAVID KOCH: Well Chris has left us, and we've been able to find someone who's been following Jesus as he's been journeying toward Jerusalem. He might be able to explain what's going on. David Fender, lead minister at Southside Uniting Church, welcome along.

DAVID FENDER: Thanks David. It's certainly been an exciting day today and one that I think people will still be talking about 2000 years later. Because today is a day of mixed expectations. You're certainly right, the crowds have come out to see the arrival of a king. A king ready to drive out the Roman Empire and to re-establish the kingdom of Israel. Because for them this is something that they've looked for, for hundreds of years. It's been promised to them by God. Psalm 118:25 – 26 says, "Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord." And so the crowd calls out Hosanna, Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the lord. They see Jesus as their saviour. And he has come to save them.

NATALIE BARR: But this bloke on the donkey looks so meek, he doesn't even have an army. How is he going to save a whole country against the strongest army in the world?

DF: But that's the amazing thing about Jesus, that confounds people now and will confound people into the future. Jesus has come to Jerusalem in order to be captured. He has come to die. But he knows that this isn't the end of the story, because he will rise to life again after 3 days.

DK: Wow, hang on. That's a big claim. Nobody willingly presents themselves into the hands of the people who are going to kill them. What proof do you have of this?

DF: Jesus' own words. Just recently, he said to this to his followers, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again."

NB: But that doesn't make sense. None of this makes sense.

DF: That's what people have been discovering all along as they've listened to Jesus. Jesus continually takes preconceived ideas, the established norm of how things are done, and turns them around. For instance, Jesus was talking to some experts in the law, and one asked him to define the term "neighbour." Of course, he knew that the answer was someone like him, who obeyed the law and was Jewish. But Jesus told a story and ended up saying that the neighbour was a Samaritan, an enemy. That simple little story opens up a whole can of worms when we now have to think about who we serve and love.

Then Jesus was asked about who was more sinful. After all there'd been people who'd been killed by King Herod when they were offering sacrifices and others who'd been killed when a tower fell on them, obviously this was God's judgement, and they were the worst. Again, Jesus told a parable. The point was that God's people were expected to demonstrate actions of justice, righteousness, faithfulness, and love. Too often it is easier to condemn others, but he challenged people to think about their own sinfulness.

And then in what may have been the most controversial moment, Jesus spent time with sinners and tax collectors, and when people muttered about that, Jesus told 3 stories about a lost sheep, a lost coin and 2 lost sons. The point of all these stories was that God loves those who are lost. The sinners and tax collectors are so important, that he'd leave the rest behind and go and look for them.

He also told a story about 2 men, one rich and the other poor. When they both died, their fortunes were reversed. It was too late and the rich man suffered because he'd failed to care for the poor man. It challenged his listeners who put importance on riches, prestige and power and caused them to think about how God calls us to care for those others do not.

And then only in the past week Jesus showed how he brings salvation to outsiders who receive him with joy. A blind beggar and a chief tax collector both are brought from being outsiders and made insiders.

DK: Sorry David, I'm just receiving some late breaking news. Apparently, after finishing his parade, Jesus has gone straight to the Temple and overturned all the tables of the money lenders and sellers. He's kicked them out of the temple and said, and I'm quoting here, 'My house will be a house of prayer' Luke 19:46.

DF: That doesn't surprise me. All throughout his life Jesus has been pointing out the alternative way of his kingdom. When we cry out Hosanna and welcome Jesus we think that he's coming to us on our terms. Yet, Jesus comes on his terms. He comes to proclaim the rescuing love of God and to bring about a kingdom. But he does this by confronting the forces of this world in humility, so that he can absorb all that they put against him, and triumph over it.

You know I hope that there are people here in this crowd who will say "I don't get it." Because it doesn't make sense. A king who rides a donkey. A king who finds himself on a cross, not a throne. A king who humbles himself in love before his own people. It's only once we don't get it that he is able to push aside all our preconceived ideas about what following him means and allow him to create and recreate his life within us.

NB: But what does that mean for this crowd?

DF: Well, I think that they have a choice. Some will go on to be disappointed. These are the ones that want Jesus to fit into their plans. They see him being there for their convenience. They want their plans to be accommodated and to allow their beliefs and values to dictate what they do. For these, I think that it won't be long before they are calling for Jesus to be crucified.

For others, they will see with greater clarity the call Jesus makes to follow him. This isn't a once of thing, but it's a constant state of growth and letting go. Of celebrating new beginnings and letting go of the past. These are the people who will accept Jesus' invitation to take up their own cross, die to self and follow him.