

From our Churches

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Church:

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The ‘Not-So-Triumphal’ Entry

[Matthew 21]

- Monologue by Jesus
- **Setting/Props:**
 - Wear a simple robe
 - Enter room with children singing “*Hosanna*” and waving palm branches while walking to the front. During this time, several adults [*asked beforehand*] shout out “Glory to God in the Highest” and other titles of God. These adults should be scattered throughout the sanctuary.
 - The monologue should be spoken with appropriate feeling and emotion. These are perhaps some of Jesus’ thoughts that day, combined with things he actually said.

“The shouting has not stopped, and neither has the ringing in my ears. The crowd continues to grow larger as we come closer to Jerusalem, and some of the newcomers have joined in on the shouting as well. The ones towards the back can barely see me, even while I sit upon this colt, and yet many direct their praises to me. Reciting from the book of Psalms they shout: Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed in the king who comes in the name of the Lord!...and I nod and smile because they are right – I am their long-awaited Messiah, the Son of David. As my Father’s Son and I have come to do His will.

I could not honestly say I am unhappy with this welcome. I know that it was prophesied to be this way, that they would say these things about me and prepare for this large, excited crowd whose joyful shouting sends a shiver down my spine. It does feel good – especially as I remember the reception given me in my home town Nazareth. There they took great offence at the claim that my authority came from God the Father, and it was made quite clear to me that I was not welcome among them. But today, among this crowd, I am welcome – if only for the moment.

It would be difficult not to feel somewhat joyful at seeing so many friendly and familiar faces among this jubilant crowd. Like Bartimaeus up ahead, yelling at the top of his lungs. Now there is a man of faith. We found him begging at the roadside as we left Jericho – or rather he found us; for as we drew close he was shouting my name loud enough to carry above the nose of the crowd. The crowd tried to push him away but he persisted in shouting out “Son of David, have mercy on me!” I had the disciples bring him to me, for I could not ignore his

plea. "What is it you want me to do?" I had asked him. His answer was simple yet radiated his faithful determination: "I want to see," he said. That request cost him his privilege of speech in the synagogue, but he saw the light. And later when I told him I was the Messiah, he believed me without hesitation or doubt! If only there were more who would see the light like him!

[*Chuckle*] I can't help but chuckle a little as I watch the 12 strut around me like peacocks yelling as much and as loud as the crowd, informing everyone who will listen that they know me well. Where it appropriate for them to discard their robes I'm sure they'd be doing cartwheels by now. [*Pause*] My poor friends...if only you understood what is to come...but I will explain it again later and today enjoy your laughter and merrymaking.

Hey, there's that Samaritan fellow I healed of leprosy a while back. He was with 9 others at the time, and I healed them all; but as I recall he's the only one who returned to thank me. I might have become angry with the others, but by then I guess it no longer surprised me to find the Gentiles more willing to believe me than my own people. It looks like he has brought a number of friends with him here today. It warms my heart to see him once again – I only wish my own people would respond in this same way.

Of course Lazarus and his friends from Bethany must be around in this crowd somewhere, my good friend hasn't been far away ever since that day I brought him back from the dead. When Lazarus fell sick, his sisters Mary and Martha sent word to me at the Jordan River. We finally arrived in Bethany to find that Lazarus had already been dead for 4 days. [*Hurt*] It hurt me deeply to see Mary and Martha grieve to save Lazarus from the grave. I raised Lazarus from the dead that day, and I will always remember the tremendous joy on the sisters' faces as faithful hope became reality. Today it brings me joy to see Lazarus enjoying the life given him.

The city walls have only now come into view. [*Troubled*] 'O Jerusalem! If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring peace to you – but now it is hidden from our eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will lay siege to your walls, hemming you in on every side. They will build ramps against the walls then dash you to the ground. Not one stone will be left upon another, and even the children will fall – and all this will come to pass because you did not recognize this time of God's coming to you. You will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' O Jerusalem!

A few of the disciples have noticed the silent tears coursing down my cheeks, but thinking they are solely tears of joy turn away in embarrassment and do not question me. It seems only the donkey's colt beneath me senses my anguish. I do not blame them for they have not understood what I have tried to make clear for them. That understanding will come soon enough. My friends, how I wish you could be saved from the darkness of these next days – days filled with denial and dark plots of betrayal.

Strong Peter, dear Peter, were you to have your way, that which will transpire these next days would not take place. I am sorry to have been so harsh with you my friend, but I could not allow you to stand in the way of the path my Father has laid before me. You too have a path to follow and were I to tell you now, you would not believe it. But you who would protect me from all harm will soon desert me to avoid sharing my fate. [*Pause*] **IS** there none who would share this burden with me?

Ah, there you are Judas. Already you being to test which way the wind will blow. Knowing the part you will play in my death I should probably hate you. But I cannot. If it were not you then another. And many more after you in the ages will come.

[Sad] We have become like a family, all of you, and I. It saddens me to think of your grief and loneliness as I leave you. Some of you will feel disappointed and cheated – perhaps even as I die painfully on the cross. James and John you came to me once bold and confident. My lot you would share if you could then in glory sit at my right and left. You too will feel cheated of that which I promised you; for then you did not fully understand the cup I am to drink nor the baptism I am to be baptised with. Later you will no longer be alone, but if I could spare you this time...I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever...I will not leave you as orphans but will come to you...Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.

Some of the Pharisees and other religious rulers have now joined the crowd waiting at the gates. They question onlookers, no doubt looking for an excuse to arrest me. Just a few days, friends, and one I love will deliver me to you. I have only sympathy for you self-righteous hypocrites. Because of all your laws, you have missed the son of the God you try so hard to obey. Some of you will know that inside you, when the time comes, but then it will be too late. Anger begins to burn within me as I see the fear in the eyes of the people near you. [Crescendo] You think you serve my Father, but it is another who is your master. Everything you do is done for other men to see. Woe to you, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. You are blind to your own wickedness. ON the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside you are full of greed and hypocrisy. You snakes! You brood of vipers! [Anger] And look what you have done to my Father's House! This used to be a place of prayer, but in your greed you are making it into a den of robbers and thieves! Get out!

The wolves have scattered. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Now the blind and crippled may come to me and I will make them whole. Learn from me, for I am gentle and Humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

A beautiful sound, the voices of children. Hosanna to the Son of David, they shout. It does not matter that it bothers the Pharisees so, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to children such as these. Anyone who will receive the kingdom of God like a little child will enter it.

This day has been tiring, and we return to Bethany for the night.

Abba Father, I cannot sleep. I'm exhausted from the events of this long and difficult day, yet the turmoil within me hold back my sleep. The time has come. O Father, comfort and sustain me as each day brings me closer to the cross. Please let me feel you near me. Fill me with your strength so that I do not turn back from this road that I willingly chose to follow so long ago. Today my heart-felt crushed-broken within me as I viewed Jerusalem; as I thought of how the people have prayed for the Messiah. And yet how blind they have been to not recognize that I have indeed come.

O Father, I pray for those you have given me. I will not remain in the world much longer, but they are still in the world. How I yearn to spare them from the coming destruction. Protect them, Holy Father, but the power of your name so that they may be one as we are one. I pray these things now while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. As you sent me into the

world, I have sent them into the world. Give me the faith to keep believing that I have sown seeds that will bear fruit. How discouraging it has been to see even my own disciples not understand to keep teaching – to keep explaining – that which I had hoped would seem clear to dismay and confusion that I know my words of sacrifice and death bring to them. Help me to gently show them that this is the way – your way, the way by which all people may be made right with you.

And Father, my prayer is not for my disciples alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, just as you are in me and I am in you, Father, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me, and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Father, for the thoughts and feelings that continue to race through my mind: the awareness of the insincerity and fickleness of the crowds who today would have me crowned as their king, but will join others at the end of the week in shouting for my crucifixion. The anger and indignation I felt so strongly as I saw your house of prayer turned into a market place, to fatten their purses at the price of robbing the poor who come to worship. The needs, that would consume me, of the blind and the crippled who again came to me for healing. The confusion and concern, anxiety and even each day brings them and I closer to the cross...Father, for all these feelings I need your calming spirit. Envelope me with your presence. Help me to again hear your encouraging voice, as it strengthens me and fills me with your peace, especially now as my time has come. [*Pause*]

My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”