

Matthew 21:1-11 Jesus Enters Jerusalem

21When 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 fulfill 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.” (Zechariah 9:9-10) 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!” (Psalm 118:26) ¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.

Zechariah 9:9-10

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

“Holy Week starts with a provocative, even shocking, political statement that gets to the heat of our predicament. It begins with a peace march. . . Jesus’ arrival into Jerusalem coincides with the triumphal military entry of the Roman imperial representative, Pontius Pilate. On the other side of the walled city, Pilate rides into Jerusalem on his war chariot and his war horse, with the whole cohort of 600 Roman soldiers, making a full show of imperial force, power, war, and military triumph. But here, on the other side of Jerusalem, Jesus rides in on a donkey – meek, humble, gentle, and nonviolent. He is the opposite of the war machine, imperial might, and military power. He comes as a symbol of nonviolent power. He embodies the God of



Peace. He is a new kind of king – a king of nonviolence. His symbolic act is bold, political street theater at its finest.”

John Dear, *Walking the Way*, page 40, Twenty-Third Publications, New London, CT, 2015

Matthew 21:12-17 Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a den of robbers.” (Isaiah 56:7) ¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became angry ¹⁶and said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself?’” (Psalm 8:2) ¹⁷He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

John 2:13-16

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!”

“Inevitably, the question comes up, “Yes, but didn’t Jesus chase people out of the Temple with a whip? Isn’t that violent?” We’re told that Jesus made a whip from cords and drove out the oxen, sheep, and doves. . . this is the only instance in the entire Bible where that particular obscure Greek word, translated as “whip” was ever used. To get thousands of cattle, sheep, and oxen into this enormous five-story structure, the herders used this particular type of cord to lead the animals up the massive stone walkways into the building. Jesus simply took those ropes, which the cattle, sheep, and oxen would have recognized, to lead the animals outside. . . Jesus actually saves the animals from their impending execution.”

John Dear, *Walking the Way*, pages 51-52, Twenty-Third Publications, New London, CT, 2015

“A church that doesn’t provoke any crisis, a gospel that doesn’t unsettle, a word of God that doesn’t get under anyone’s skin, a word of God that doesn’t touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed – what gospel is that?” – Oscar Romero

Justice Call to Worship for Palm Sunday, 2019 Guest Post by Stephen Price

This happened. Jesus entered Jerusalem this way.
But it isn’t just a one time thing. Jesus still comes in the middle of our world and our distress and we still cry out, **Hosanna, Save Us**

When the ordered world and its institutions fail us, **Hosanna, Save Us**
When our trust in power, violence, and military might turns on us and becomes oppressive, **Hosanna, Save Us**

When we are trapped in behaviors that pull us away
from relationship with God and each other,

Hosanna, Save Us

When the harms done to us through racism, sexism, or victimization
become open wounds in our lives,
destroying our trust and making us hate ourselves

Hosanna, Save Us

When society itself becomes an enslaving trap
from which we are afraid we cannot escape

Hosanna, Save Us

From gun violence in our schools and on our streets
that kills our children and makes targets of people of color
and those who are marginalized by our society

Hosanna, Save Us

From leaders who lack courage,
or who have sold out for money and power

Hosanna, Save Us

From everything that is life destroying,
O God, and separates us from You

Hosanna, Save Us

No wonder they told Jesus to shut His people up. This is language that changes the world. And it changes the world because God hears our cry. God gives God’s own Self in Jesus to do what we cannot...and then invites us to be part of that redeeming work in the world. But today, this Sunday, we point to the wounds, the sins, the oppressions we see in ourselves and in the world around us and we cry out, **Hosanna, Save Us.**

Posted on April 8, 2019 by Maren Tirabassi,

<https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2019/04/08/palm-sunday-2019/>



Mark 21:15-19 One detail — Cleansing the Temple

I am a catcher of pigeons, a lucky one
on this morning of upturned tables and feathers.

I do not steal coins, even though they roll to my toes,
even though I was praying in this house of prayer
that somehow I would not need always to be so poor.

And yet I was raised
never to make an offering of anything that I did not earn.

It tumbles the world upside down
that someone like me should be given what I have not deserved,
even a serendipitous bundle of wings, hollow bones, bright eyes –
a fitting sacrifice for my newborn child.

Someone said there was anger on both sides.

I don’t remember that – only how I felt

when I opened my fingers to let the bird fly.

Posted on March 19, 2018 by Maren Tirabassi,

<https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2018/03/19/mark-1115-19-one-detail-cleansing-the-temple/>



Prayer before reading Matthew 21: 12-13 (cleansing of the temple)

God, this is one of those scriptures
where Jesus criticizes someone
who isn’t me. Not.

Help me read it as my church,
even with the rock-bottom no-frills budget.
Jesus is tossing the social justice ministry
and the stewardship drive,
the new choir robes
and the cost-of-living pay increases.

Whoever we are
and wherever we share faith –
we are not perfect at being
a house of prayer for all people.

Whoever we are
and wherever we share faith,
we are caught –
fingers sticky with pigeon feathers.

Posted on April 10, 2017 by Maren Tirabassi, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2017/04/10/prayer-before-reading-matthew-21-12-13-cleansing-of-the-temple/>