

"Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!"

20 of the world's most powerful leaders met in London this week for the G20 conference. They came in their private 747's and chauffeured limousines and walking on red carpets. They came with entourages and PR machines. They came to sort out the economic mess we are all in. Outside the noisy crowds gathered. Some were there to catch a glimpse of these famous and powerful men. Some were there hoping for a miracle, hoping like we all do that these powerful men might be able to do something to save the world from economic disaster. Others were protesting, suggesting these men should be saving the planet before they save the banks and our superannuation. Some just want them to save their jobs, others just want to save the whales, and others, well they were there looking for someone to blame and crucify for the mess we are in.

That sounds much like Palm Sunday. Today, Palm Sunday, we remember and celebrate our Lord's arrival in Jerusalem, not on a 747 or limousine but on a donkey. Jesus makes a provocative statement with his entry. It might not seem like one, riding into town on donkey but anyone who knew their Old Testament would have recognized Jesus was fulfilling an old prophecy, and setting himself up as the messiah, the saviour king of the world, the one God promised through the prophets to send. He was also making a statement about the kind of King he would be – not proud and arrogant and self-seeking, but a humble, servant king.

The people hit the streets when they heard Jesus was coming, and they rolled out the green carpet for him – they tore off branches from the trees (not environmentally friendly but it's not everyday the messiah comes to town!) And they threw their own coats on the ground too to make a royal carpet for him to ride on. Then they shouted **"Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!"**

Hosanna means "save us!" "Bail us out Lord!" They were hopeful that this Jesus if he was the messiah would save them and look after them. But what did they want him to save them from? Some on the street probably wanted to be free from Roman occupation. Some probably wanted a job, some food for the kids and a roof over their heads, some their own personal miracle - maybe a healing or some peace and an end to violence. They were hoping he would fix things, change things and make them better not just for themselves but the whole world.

What do you want from God here today? What are you hoping he might do for you? For the world? "Save us Lord" , "bail us out Lord" - but from what? What do you want to be saved from and why?

If you are looking for a messiah, a saviour who will fix all your problems instantaneously, if you are looking for some divine bail-out from every mess you get into, then forget it. Forget him. Jesus isn't that kind of messiah and king. You might as well join the crowds of disillusioned people who stopped waving palm branches and started waving fists at him.

If we pin the wrong hopes on Jesus as messiah then we will be disappointed with him. The crowd that lined the street that day must have become disillusioned with Jesus pretty quickly because within a week they were leading him out of the same city to crucify him on a rubbish dump. **"We have no king but Caesar!"** they would say. Jesus turned out to be a dud as far as they were concerned. Their "saviour" disappointed them, angered them and so they rejected him. That would never happen to us!? Would it? Does it? Ever been disappointed, frustrated with the kind of Messiah Jesus is, the kind of king he came to be? Hasn't he done enough to earn your honour, faith and trust?

So what did Jesus come into Jerusalem as the messiah king to save them and us from? It was from themselves, and it is from ourselves. Jesus, the Christ rode into Jerusalem as messiah and saviour king to save us from us! He came to save us from the consequences of being us! He came to take what we deserve for our selfish living, like the greed that ruins the world and our own lives in the world. He came because of our tendency to want to rule our own lives without God's interference. He came because we too crucify other people in our own lives. He came to take God's anger and judgement at our godlessness and sin away from us and onto himself and to die for it. That's what he was here to do.

He came to do that, to save the world and bail us out not by negotiation, not by stimulating the economy with \$1.6 trillion from heaven, not by military might, but by giving himself away, by emptying himself of his divine rights and glory and becoming us and by dying as us and for us and the world on Good Friday. As he hangs there on the cross helplessly, being mocked for claiming to be a king and wearing a crown of thorns, he is in a strange way, God's way, saving us, forgiving us, and setting us free. It's what he came to do and the kind of king he came to be. A King who gives of and gives up himself to save the world.

So what can Georgie who was baptized here this morning expect of this Jesus who is now her messiah and saviour King, who has come into her life in baptism? And what can we expect of him together with her as part of his kingdom?

With Jesus as our king we can expect and enjoy a daily royal pardon for all our sin. When Jesus declared from the cross "Father, forgive them" he was also saying that to us. And he says to us as he did the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with me in paradise". At every moment despite our worst selves we can know God still loves us and has not abandoned us but bails us out with forgiveness at the end of every day! We can live with a free conscience.

With Jesus as our king we are joined together in his kingdom, his church. He has placed us in relationship with our fellow Christians as part of this kingdom when we were baptised, a kingdom that he says is in this world but not of this world. He promises us he will always be there for us no matter what happens in this life and in this world, and he assures that there is nothing that can ever stop him loving us, no powers that be, no suffering, not even death. We can also expect our prayers for ourselves and the world to be heard and answered in heaven— only in his way and time, "divine time", not ours.

With Jesus as our king we can expect to be challenged and changed as he calls and directs us to a new way of thinking and living, his way. Philippians 2 says **"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!"** Living in his kingdom with him as king is not just about looking after and saving ourselves and our own and our jobs and bank accounts and houses. It is about living with faith and sharing the gospel of God's grace and generosity and love and forgiveness whatever life is like for us. It's about working with him to save people from themselves and the consequences through what he has done for all of us. It is not about being bailed out for an easy life but being saved to serve others rather than serving ourselves, and making life different and better for them as a witness to Christ who has made life eternally better for us

At the end of life our messiah king promises to save us not from dying, but through his own death, so that we too will one day after our own resurrection share in his eternal kingdom where things will be as they are meant to be and we will never need to cry out "Lord save me" again!

"Lord save us", "Lord bail us out" we cry during this week leading up to Easter, and rightly so. But remember what he came to bail you out from – yourself, and remember what he came to bail you out for – a different kind of life with a different way of thinking which hopefully will make an eternal difference in the lives we touch for him.