**Message – Re-imaging the King.**

**I don’t know if many of you watched the programme last Sunday night on Prime which had a variety of people of different beliefs traveling the Camino Rd on the Pilgrimage route? The second part of it is on tonight. There’s a couple of sincere Christian believers, as well as some who were brought up in the faith but have left it and others who have never had faith at all. Their conversations and observations along the way are quite insightful. The Jewish people were pilgrim people. Children of the Torah were taught from Deuteronomy a wandering Aramean was our father... For faithful Jews travelling to Jerusalem for a holy festival especially the Passover was something to be done, once if not regularly. For Jesus, his journey began right up north when he ascended a mountain and there was transfigures, with his clothes turning a bright white and Moses and Elijah meeting him there. At intervals along the way we have stepped into the journey like fellow pilgrims with the disciples. Through these Lenten weeks we have ourselves moved closer and closer to the cross. Today, as Jesus enters Jerusalem, can you imagine yourself there, in the crowd, excited to be in Jerusalem for Passover, getting involved in with all the other visitors. Maybe you have no idea of who this Jesus is, but you like the idea of a new king in town. Maybe you’ve been there up around Galilee and have seen some miracles and heard him speak? As we go through this week, can you walk with Jesus, through his sufferings and pain, all the way to new life?**

**The last season of Game of Thrones is just starting. I’ve never watched a single episode of game of thrones, but I know its been a must watch for many people. There’s a game of thrones in a sense going on here with its final episodes in Jerusalem. The throne of God or the throne of Rome? Jesus or Caesar?**

**But, at the time, much of the meaning went over their heads. It was not until the early church, after the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension to heaven that they realised what Jesus sufferings and death meant. They remembered Jesus’ actions and came to understand their meaning. This, Jesus said would be a ministry of the Holy Spirit.**

**John 16:13 13When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.**

**Eye witnesses of this procession saw what happened, they heard the voices but they did not understand, until, filled with the Holy Spirit – aha – now I get it.**

**What did they understand about Jesus after he had risen from the dead and been glorified, ascending into heaven?**

**Jesus chooses a young donkey, and rides it into Jerusalem. The people take palm branches and head out to meet him, waving them in his presence as a way of honoring him.**

**Hosanna, they cry blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, God saves, or God save us, or a bit of both. Looking to Jesus as savior and hoping in him for salvation.**

**What did they know? What did they understand by their actions? Most likely there were some hoping for an uprising through Jesus to over throw the Roman army. Maybe, some were carried away by the pageantry leading the heightened crowd up to the Passover. They saw a sight which reminded them of the processions they had been told about from the great days of the Kings of Israel, like is recorded in Psalm 118. Whatever they understood at the time, after Jesus was glorified, the early church understood what sort of a savior he was, and what sort of deliverance he brought.**

**He was their savior, the savior of their sins, the giver of eternal life. The deliverance he brought was not from the ruling Romans, but from their own sin which was eroding them and stealing their lives.**

**Do not be afraid see you king comes riding on a donkey’s colt.**

**When a king returned from battle, victorious, riding high on the back of a majestic stallion there would be a great procession. Behind the King would follow the spoils if war, the treasures they had taken, the slaves they had gained, trudging, heads down defeated. The king would ride, through the procession, with his army, to the temple to worship and make sacrifices of praise for giving them the victory.**

**Also, at the time, people would have been used to seeing Roman Garrisons riding through town, maybe the Centurion would be high on a horse, their sword at their side ready to be taken out and used at any time it was needed.**

**Don’t be afraid. When the King came riding in with his army showing off his power, that was a great encouragement for those who were on the king’s side, and so long as the king used their power wisely, the presence of the king provided security. However, if you got on the wrong side of the king, then – not good news. The authorities – or even the same soldiers who had won a victory for your people could be put to work to come and get you.**

**Before Kings in Israel, the people in Samuel’s time asked God for a King, but God was reluctant. He was their true King. More than that when Israel got a king, God warned that they would tax the people hard and leave them in poverty. They would also conscript their youngest and strongest to be in the king’s army and many of them would die fighting the king’s battles. God warned them against having a King because they would laud it over the masses.**

**So, having a King might not be a good thing, it might be a reason for fear but, do not be afraid… see, your king comes riding on a donkey. Jesus was rightly identified as a king the true king of Israel, the one who was a true protection for the people referred to as the daughter of Zion.**

**Jesus their true king comes to them lowly, riding on a small animal, not towering over them. On a donkey’s colt, much more the work animal of the common people.**

**Jesus with no army, but a few disciples who walked in and among the crowd. Fellow pilgrims on the way.**

**We get this picture of gentleness and humility in the best sense of the word – of a presence which came alongside, not towered over them.**

**For us, we can want a deliverer to come and make us better, to rescue us from this or from that. Dear God, I wish there was someone to make this decision for me. Dear God, please can a knight in shining armor come to lift me up from the pit I’m in and let me ride up high with him? Jesus please ease my burden. Whatever the cry for rescue is, after Jesus ascended into heaven the disciples were still left in the same situation. They were still ruled by the Romans. There was still of poverty, injustice, abuse, etc. Salvation didn’t mean escape from trouble. But now they had this picture of Jesus high and lifted up as the ultimate victor over sin – theirs and others and of the world powers. But, instead of a deliverer to rescue from hardship, they had one who was with them in the form of the Holy Spirit to fill them and lead them and bring them into all truth. They were set free inside – even if outside world was still one of being ruled over by others.**

**So, what sort of deliverer do we want?**

**Secondly can we accept a Saviour who is at our side, rather than ruling over us? I remember being in music rehearsals and having the music teacher standing right behind me and over me, and do you think I could play a note, not a chance. I know that the teacher was there to check on my progress and to coach me towards getting better, but all I could sense was them standing over, judging, critiquing.**

**Instead we have the repeated image of Jesus who is God’s one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. The repeated image is of Jesus as compassionate to the needy. Yes a real challenge to the arrogant, but to all who look to him for help they find one who doesn’t rule over with judgement. Can we feel completely safe, safe as a child in their parent’s arms? Can we accept a God who doesn’t judge us or condemn us?**

**Response: Let us pray...**