

Small Group Notes1: April 2020

Mistaken Identity?

Matthew 21: 1-11 & Matthew 22: 41-46

Welcome:

This Easter is unlike any other Easter we've ever experienced.

The majority of shops are shut.

Only essential services are being provided.

Many people are working and studying from home.

Trips to visit family and friends have been cancelled.

As we journey towards Easter, we will maybe identify more closely than we've ever done before with the range of emotions experienced by Jesus' followers. For the events of that first Easter week were an emotional rollercoaster.

Try to list the emotions Jesus' followers went through in just 7 days.

Confusion. Anger. Betrayal. Fear. Cowardly acts. Lies. Injustice. Despair.

And yet it is a week bookended with joy.

The joy of resurrection Sunday – the central, defining feature of our faith. And that joy from the crowds as the week began.

However you feel you are not alone. Our prayer is that we may find strength and renewed hope this Easter.

Things that we do:

How will you celebrate Easter this year?

Opening Reading and Prayer

Read: Isaiah 43: 1-13

Let these words guide you to pray.

Introduction:

Can you recall a time when you've seen, or been part of, a large, noisy crowd? What was the occasion? Did you join in?

Being part of a large crowd of people can lead to all sorts of behaviour.

There can be joy – think of a crowd of sports fans celebrating the victory of their team.

There can be violence – think of an angry mob on the move.

There can be shared emotions – think of the crowds gathered for a royal wedding or funeral.

So, what do you think about the crowds that went ahead of Jesus? Was this a good or a bad thing?

Reading 1: Matthew 21: 1-11

- Where do these events take place? Is this a significant location?
- Look at verse 2. What is the role of the donkey? See also Zechariah 9: 9
- Do you think Jesus' instructions made sense? What did the disciples do?
- Can you recall an occasion when obedience to Jesus didn't make sense?
- Why was there a large crowd? What did they do?
- Who do you think they thought Jesus was? Were they in anyway correct?

Reading 2: Matthew 22: 34-46

- Which is the greatest commandment?
- Who are our neighbours?
- Look at verse 42. Why did Jesus ask this question?

- How did the Pharisees answer Jesus' question? How would you answer Jesus' question?

Thought:

- Can you think of some ways we might show God's love to our neighbours at this time?

Prayer Pointers:

- We pray for the Earley Help hub which has been launched by the different churches in Earley. May God lead us to help the right people at the right time. (Details of the Earley Help hub are on facebook)
- We pray for our national leaders in government, healthcare and science. May God grant them wisdom as they seek to lead our nation through this crisis.
- We pray for all individual and families who have suffered an infection. May God grant healing to the sick and comfort to those grieving
- We pray for our church family remembering those who work in the NHS and pharmacies. May God protect and encourage us all at this time

Closing Thought:

- Matthew 22: 37: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all you mind.