

“Peace in Heaven and Earth”

April 10, 2022
King City United Church
York United Ministries
Rev. Andrew K. Lee

Prayer for Illumination

Holy Creator, who loves us so, we have followed Jesus to Jerusalem. It has been a long journey this year. Please help us receive your word today and let it bring hope to us as we continue to stumble along this last part of our Lenten path. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**¹

Scripture Readings

Luke 19:28-38 Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

28 After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.
29 When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, **30** saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. **31** If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” **32** So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. **33** As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” **34** They said, “The Lord needs it.” **35** Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. **36** As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. **37** As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, **38** saying,

“Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven,
and glory in the highest heaven!”

This is word of Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God.

¹ by Lisa Norman, Enniskillen-Tyrone UC, Tyrone, ON.

<Reflection>

Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna!

Hosanna!

The King of Israel! Hosanna!

Have you ever experienced a mixed feeling? We have mixed feelings when we graduate from school. We miss our friends in classes and clubs; we miss our close teachers; we miss the school building where we frantically bumped into each other. At the same time, we have another chapter of life beyond school, so we feel new hope and new energy. We have mixed feelings when we move to a new place and leave the house that we spent our childhood in. We miss the backyard, the basement, the old kitchen table, and the living room where we spent too much time on the couch. At the same time, we do have another place to live and decorate, so we are refreshed. We have mixed feelings when we have a funeral for a loved one. We instantly feel sad, but simultaneously, we recall the good memories with our loved one with gratitude. Throughout our life, we have opportunities to feel mixed feelings, and that feeling is not easily negligible at all.



A medium that captures the moment of mixed human emotions is art. I was intrigued when I read an article from *The Guardian*, one of the Canadian newspapers, that shared a story of a Dutch art detective, Arthur Brand,

in 2019. He found Pablo Picasso's stolen painting about 20 years ago. The painting is called *Portrait of Dora Maar* (1938).

Whenever I see this painting, I feel somewhat confused because I cannot tell the woman's mood. Is she happy, sad, concerned, ambitious, or nostalgic? The more I observe, the more I need to ponder the painting. Whatever Picasso intended, I can at least tell that the character has mixed emotions.

While I was reflecting on the event of Jesus entering Jerusalem, riding a colt, Dora Maar's facial expression overlapped with that of Jesus. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus visited Jerusalem five times. And this visitation is the final, 5th visit. Recently I preached about Jesus who wept, lamenting, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!" [\[1\]](#) His lamentation happens in his final visit to Jerusalem. Jesus did his last chapter of ministry and was ready to be crucified. But today, when entering the city of Jerusalem, the mood is of exaltation. People cheered and exclaimed;

"Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven,
and glory in the highest heaven!" [\[2\]](#)

That description that Luke writes is taken from Zachariah 9:9. It says;

"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."[\[3\]](#)

The Israelites were filled with pride and joy because they were eye-witnessing their Messiah, whom they had longed for. They believed that Jesus on a colt would change the world and be their king, reigning with heavenly peace. So they placed their cloaks on the road to welcome him, showing their respect. The mood of triumph travelled from the entrance of Jerusalem.

Now can you imagine Jesus' disciples' reaction? They must've been excited by the crowd's cheering. Then how about Jesus? Would he be happy and enjoy the cheering mood? Or would he look so sad? Likewise, we cannot tell precisely about the lady in Picasso's painting. Instead, we can tell Jesus may have mixed feelings, and his facial expression would've been complicated.

Let me explain how forgiving Jesus was. You know, the Israelites misunderstood the true meaning of the Messiah and the kingdom of God, and yet, Jesus didn't blame them. Instead, he let the words of the prophets from Zachariah in the Old Testament be accomplished. And without blaming them, he rather prayed for them to God: "Forgive them, Father, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:24) Although the crowd romanticized the "peace in heaven," Jesus got

ready to take the cross for the sins of the world for the "peace on earth." While they were cheering, the Kingdom of God, the true meaning of the Messiah, and the genuine peace in both heaven and earth were *hidden* from their eyes. And now we know that it was the cross for the world.

From the scene of Jesus' final entry to Jerusalem, we also cheered with Palm tree leaves, recalling and commemorating Jesus' triumphant entry; however, we know that the way of Jesus was all about the cross of self-sacrifice. Therefore, we can't cheer for him with joy only. Instead, we share Jesus' mixed feelings with humble hearts, wondering if there is any hidden meaning of the cross for us.

In order to know the hidden meaning, or at least true meaning, of Jesus' cross, we must discern every word of the Bible and even the blank margin of the Bible Scripture itself. It doesn't mean that we must study the exegetical analysis of the original text of the Bible, but it does mean that we must sincerely and genuinely live out the word in our life journey. And the life that lives out the Word of God must be of the followers of Jesus, who humbly obeyed God and sacrificed himself to give eternal life. But, in doing so, we still need to ask ourselves; is there anything hidden from our eyes?

We need to be humble because we do not fully understand God's plan. We need to listen to God with a pure heart because we are not God. So we exclaim for Jesus, suffer with Jesus, and share the permanent victory with Jesus. So we weep for the dead, resist war crime, hate violence, abhor injustice, and support peace. So we grieve for the

ecological crisis, reflect on human history, and mend our direction of actions with heartbreaking repentance. Yet, we still need to ask ourselves; is there anything hidden from our eyes? So we humbly ask God to open our spiritual eyes to see the genuine meaning of the cross for today.

Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna
Peace in Heaven and peace on earth! Hosanna.

We praise the Lord throughout our lives until we meet God face to face.
Be the Lord's disciple; be Jesus' companion; the companion of sorrow,
joy, suffering, and victory of the cross. Let us pray silently.

[\[1\]](#) Luke 13:34.

[\[2\]](#) Luke 19:38.

[\[3\]](#) Zachariah 9:9.