

Sermon: Trusting in God's Way

Readings: Philippians 2:5-11

John 12:12-16

Preacher: Revd Mike

I wonder if any of you can think of a time when you discovered that something you had believed for a long time was, in fact, very different from what you had originally thought? I remember my brother's surprise when it was revealed to him that Italians actually spoke a different language – he had assumed that they all spoke like Joe Dolce, just placing an “a” on the end of everything – “whata matter you eh? Gotta no respect!” etc. (and he went on to study at Cambridge!)

Song lyrics often provide a good example of our blindly and happily following things that don't always make a lot of sense. I'm sure many of us have sung along to a favourite tune using words that sound right, but which, when examined, are complete nonsense! I remember the Maxell cassette advert from the 1980s (what's a cassette?!)

that used Desmond Decker's *The Israelites* to show that we can easily become comfortable with hearing things incorrectly - “Me ears are alight”!

A Top 10 of most often misheard song lyrics that I found online included the following...

“Dancing queen, feel the beat from the tangerine”
Correct lyric from ABBA's 'Dancing Queen':
“Dancing queen, feel the beat from the tambourine”

“These ants are my friends, they're blowin' in the wind”
Correct lyric from Bob Dylan's 'Blowin' In The Wind': *“The answer my friend is blowin' in the wind”*

“The girl with colitis goes by”
The correct lyric from The Beatles' 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds': *“The girl with kaleidoscope eyes”*

“Saving his life from this warm sausage tea”.
Correct lyric: 'Spare him his life from this
monstrosity' from Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody'.

Today, we are remembering an event at which many people would have recalled words and lyrics that they thought they understood well, only to be later told that they had got it quite wrong. On the first Palm Sunday, the people in Jerusalem saw Jesus approaching the Holy City of David and remembered the words from scripture that would have been repeated to them on many an occasion - “See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey”. The people saw Jesus approaching and identified Him as a King. They had heard of His reputation and now the lyrics from Zacharia were there, clear and distinct – our King, our Lord, our Saviour is coming - and they welcomed him with palm branches, a welcome usually reserved for a conquering Emperor. And as they waved their branches, they sang words from

Psalm 118 “Ah-nah Adonai ho-she-ah nah” “Please Lord, save us!”

The problem was, that though they had remembered their lyrics well, they had not really understood what they referred to. For most, it would seem, Jesus' arrival in this manner signalled the coming of the one who would do just what they wanted – rally the people against the occupying Romans and kick them out of their homeland. A welcome perhaps not dissimilar to the one that is given to a champion boxer about to enter the ring.

But this was not what Jesus had come to Jerusalem to achieve. Yes, he had come as their Lord, and yes, he had come to save them - “Ah-nah Adonai ho-she-ah nah” made sense, but not as they expected. For rather than coming as a “Warrior King”, Jesus arrived as a “Servant King” – one who would give up everything for them to save them, not from the Romans, but from themselves. Jesus showed them God's way – the way of love – a way that would see Him demonstrate the fullness

of love, even to the point of being prepared to die for it on a cross.

This was not the way that they expected or wanted. And within a week, their hope turned to disappointment and then to anger...and the cries of “Hosanna” switched to ones of “crucify him!” We may wonder at the fickleness of the crowd, but we can all be guilty of imposing our expectations on God, of telling Him what we think should happen, of how the story should go, of how the lyrics should sound. And when that doesn’t happen, we can turn our backs, rejecting Him, denying Him, condemning Him.

The way of Jesus is the way of God. It is the way of complete and total goodness and wholeness...it is the way of love. It may not always seem like the way that we would choose ourselves, but I believe that if we trust in this way, it will always lead us to the destination that we would choose ourselves. So, let’s help each other on this way, even when the

words don’t make a lot of sense, let’s journey together, trusting in the Servant King.

Amen