



Hornsby Uniting Church

Our Vision: To grow in Christ and share His love.

News for March 24, 2024 - Palm Sunday

The stone which the builders rejected, has become the keystone of the corner.

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

Lost Opportunities

The New Testament uses a key word God's times of special opportunity. Times when God is doing something decisive in which we can choose to participate or refuse. There are two Greek words for time: **cronos** and **kairos**.



Chronos is time in general; as we record 24 hours in a day, 52 weeks in a year. It is time without any particular quality. But kairos is a critical time, when God is active in a special way and presents us with a window of opportunity. (In Luke's account of Palm Sunday, he actually uses the word kairos to describe the opportunity which the Holy City was offered, yet did not take.) Kairos time demands a decision from us. Deferring the decision is the same result as rejection, because we miss out on the unique moment. This opportunity may never again present itself to us. Millions of boring or wasted lives are a testimony to such missed opportunities.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on that little donkey, or a colt as Mark tells us, there was a kairos moment. A few took the opportunity to welcome him with much love and commitment, but most either ignored him, wished he would just go away, or plotted to remove his discomforting presence from their midst.

Trivial Causes - One of the saddest things about lost opportunities is that sometimes they are ignored for very trivial reasons. I say sometimes. There are, on the other hand, the occasions when people refuse to enter God's door of opportunity for very strong reasons: powerful fears maybe, or because pride is at stake, or because of their selfishness, or because to seize the opportunity will mean they must give up something to which they are most attached. However in numerous cases the reasons are indeed trivial.

We become caught up in petty joys, worries or plans. We are blinded by second-rate wants and wishes. We cling to tiddly-wink pleasures. We hang on to positions of petty status that are no more important than a child's game of hop-scotch. We adhere to the opinions of a peer group, some of whose values we may secretly despise. With such trivia we miss God's times of wonderful opportunity. So when God in Christ arrives in our street with majestic purposes more lofty than mountain peaks, we turn our backs and scuttle away to our little, familiar ant hills. *He came unto his own people, but his own did not welcome him - Bruce Prewer*

EASTER SERVICES - Hornsby Congregation

Palm Sunday March 24 - 9:30am

Prayer Vigil 25, 26, 27 - Asquith 7pm

Maundy Thursday 28 - Vigil 7:00pm

Good Friday 29 - 8:30am

Easter Sunday 31 - 9:30am



Our Journey through Lent continues, Sunday 24th March is the 40th Day as we prepare ourselves to draw nearer to Jesus in Easter.



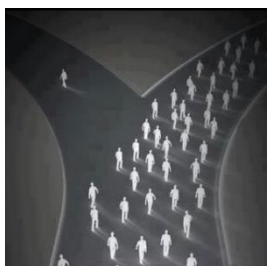
The Law, the Old Covenant, came through Moses; and the New Covenant that we celebrate in Easter came through Jesus Christ by his once atonement on the cross to redeem fallen humankind; John 1:17 states: *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth/unfailing love came by Jesus Christ.* Even though people of antiquity pledged to honour God's law, they repeatedly broke God's heart by their disobedience to God's laws. We are saved by grace that comes to us through Jesus; we became part of God's plan of salvation because the Hebrews or the Israelites broke his law and rejected him, so we were grafted in; John the apostle says in the Gospel of John 1:11-13 - *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Sadly, even though our salvation is a gift we have rewarded God with ingratitude by doing our own things which we believe to be 'good' and better than God's. The challenge to us in these modern times is this; if the Israelites and people of antiquity received just reward of retribution for their disobedience from a just, fair and righteous God, how do we expect God to overlook our sins; when we deliberately reject what His Word says and follow what humans and "science" dictate! How do we escape such disobedience?

We cannot hide behind our disobedience to God by saying we are doing 'Good Things' versus not doing God Things! *"Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."* - Romans 8:14 – That is doing God's things.

The greatest sign that you and I are maturing in our walk with God is when we can discern the difference between "good things" and "God things". When the people of Israel journeyed out of Egypt through the desert, the cloud led them by day. They could move only as fast as the cloud. If they went ahead, they went without God's presence. If they lagged behind, they also lost God's presence. Each of us must have the discernment to know when God is leading in a matter, or if it is simply a good idea. There are so many things in which you and I can be involved in but are they God things or just good things and has God called you to be part. I am not saying Good things are bad but is it what God will approve?!

In 'modern' times as today; people of the world and many who claim to be Christians have turned their backs to God's things to do good things because they believe it is good to go with the crowd, not ridiculed or ostracised by the crowd when we firm up to stand on God's Word; we prefer to please the world, by listening to those who shout above all others, who claim knowledge and insight because of their knowledge and what science says instead of God. God's Word is immutable and will never change; Matthew 24:35 states, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."* By this statement, Jesus is telling us that in the past, the present and future heaven and earth that we have today will pass away, yet His Words will never pass away.



As children of God, we are called to be led by the Spirit of God; let us do God things not Good things! This requires a level of dependence on God in which many of us really do not want to invest. It behoves us to listen, wait and study His Word and decide to act only when God's Spirit tells us to do so. Let us not allow ourselves to be moulded into the world's mould! Today, ask God to make you a Romans 8:14 man or woman who is led by the Spirit of God. Someone who is bold and Paul puts it thus in 1 Corinthians 15:58; *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* Dearly beloved in the Lord, the night is far gone, the

deeds in our world are evil and continue to drift further away from God; Romans 12:2 tells us: *And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Do not engage in "good things" that negate "God Things"; God first is God's ways preferred over humans ways. God richly bless you. *Rev Jojo Nkrumah 240324* (Inspired by Os Hillman - Today God Is First)

IN PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you with heart and life and voice, not only with outward signs such as palm branches or the occasional “Hosanna”, but with lives truly turned towards you. It seems such a distance from this Palm Sunday in Australia to that day when you entered Jerusalem with the shouts of the crowd ringing in your ears. Welcomed as a king, yet riding on a lowly donkey. Greeted with cheers and acclamations that were so soon to turn to jeers and condemnation. From this side of the resurrection, we confidently believe that we could never have been part of the jeering crowd - but would we, if we had been there?

Lord Jesus Christ, when our words and actions reflect a reluctance to confess you publicly as Lord of our lives: Forgive us.

When we fear that humbling ourselves, would be seen by others as weakness, some kind of defect in our character: Forgive us.

When we have betrayed your love for us through our lack of love for you, for others, and for ourselves : Forgive us.

When we find ourselves glossing over the events of your passion and death because we look forward to Easter as a time to enjoy holidays and have fun. Forgive us.

Lord Jesus Christ, fix your mind in us; remake us in your likeness; empty us of all that hinders us from following you to where pain and suffering, exploitation and injustice exist.

Gracious and loving God, empower us with the Holy Spirit so that our lives continually glorify you and our tongues forever confess Jesus as Lord. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen



PSALM 118:1-2, 19-29

Heh! Give thanks to God who is so good,
whose sure love flows on forever!
Let all the people join in the chorus:
God's sure love flows on forever!

Swing open the gates of love that I may enter
and give thanks to our wonderful God.
Here is the gate that belongs to God,
believers can freely go in through it.

Thank you, God, for answering me;
you are my healing and liberation.
The stone that the builders threw aside
has become our cornerstone.

This is the day that God has made;
let us be happy and celebrate it.
Save us all, God, please save us;
and make our faith a success.

Happy are you who enter in God's name,
in the house of God we bless you
God, our God, is the giver of light;
wave your branches right up to the altar.

You are my God and I will thank you;
you are my God - I will praise you.
Sing thanks to God who is so good,
whose sure love flows on forever.
- B D Prewer 2001

Do you need to contact someone? Have a support need?

Rev. Kodjo Nkrumah - 0408 250 601. Kent Blackmore - 0438 611 795

Joyce Lum - 0402 093 618. Bill Laidlaw - 9477 3409

The church office opens on Thursday mornings from 9:00 - 10:30am.