

# CHURCH OF TE HEPARA PAI

Sunday 29 March 2015

Te Rātapu Tuaono o Rēneti: te Rātapu Nikau / 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent: Palm Sunday

## THE FINAL CHALLENGE



## *The Final Challenge*

### SENTENCE OF THE DAY:

When the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone will kneel down to worship him. Everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will kneel down to worship him. Everyone's mouth will say that Jesus Christ is Lord. And God the Father will receive the glory. (Philippians 2:10-11)

### COLLECT OF THE DAY – *Let us pray:*

Almighty and ever living God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**



CHAPEL SERVICES  
LENT TERM  
HOLY WEEK AND EASTER  
2015

MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP:  
7:00PM, THURSDAY, 02 APRIL,  
2015.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE: 9:00AM,  
FRIDAY, 03 APRIL, 2015.

EASTER DAY SERVICE: 10:15AM,  
SUNDAY, 05 APRIL, 2015.



## *The Final Challenge*

Across the country today Anglican churches are celebrating **Palm Sunday** as a festival in the Church calendar. Christians celebrate Palm Sunday to remember the triumphal or victorious entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem on the last Sunday before he was nailed to a cross. Jesus' purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to make public his claim to be their Messiah or Saviour and King of Israel in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Many of the people of Jerusalem who saw Jesus arrive acknowledged or treated him as royalty by placing their cloaks or palm branches on the road before him, which was an act generally used for a king or important ruler. Immediately following this time of celebration in the ministry of Jesus, he begins his journey to the cross. Christians remember the last week of Jesus' life when both the events of the triumphal entry and crucifixion occurred, during Holy Week, the last week of Lent immediately before and concluding on Easter Sunday. Palm Sunday marks the start of Holy Week; and during the Palm Sunday service small **palm crosses** made from palm leaves are given out to help make the connection between the triumphal entry with palm branches and the crucifixion on a cross; as Palm Sunday is a time to reflect on the suffering and death of Jesus. The kaupapa for this Palm Sunday is **The Final Challenge**, being the final challenge which Jesus faced to obey God the Father and journey into Jerusalem even though it would lead to suffering and death on a cross.

In the Old Testament passage for today from Isaiah 50, the person referring to himself is the Servant, Jesus Christ. He says that he has always obeyed God the Father (Isa. 50:5), even though he knew that such obedience would lead to physical and emotional suffering (Isa. 50:6). In fact, he humbly walked the path of obedience to God the Father all the way to death - his death on a cross (Mk. 15:37). God had sent Jesus into this world to provide a way for the lost to be saved. In order for Jesus to open this way of salvation, he had to die. He had to be nailed to a cross and put to death, the one innocent of sin dying for those guilty of sin to make it possible for God to forgive those guilty of sin and grant them eternal life.

Because Jesus accepted this final challenge and walked the path of obedience to God all the way to death in our place, God raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name (Phil. 2:9). And so, in honour of the name of Jesus all beings will one day fall on their knees and all will one day openly say that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2:10-11).

When Jesus died on the cross, he opened the way to God for all who want to be saved. The pātai today is what does his death mean for you? Are you saved? If not, come to Jesus now by inviting him into your heart to obey him so that he is Lord of your life. One day, even you, lost friend, will fall on your knees and will openly say that Jesus Christ is Lord. Does it not make more sense to make Jesus Lord of your life today and be saved, than to deny Jesus, die lost and still have to openly say that Jesus Christ is Lord some day? Do you not want to do it when it can save you instead of when it will be too late and can do you no good?

In the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - amen.



## The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a



*A reading from Isaiah chapter 50 beginning at verse 4.*

<sup>4</sup> The LORD and King has taught me what to say. He has taught me how to help those who are tired. He wakes me up every morning. He makes me want to listen like a good student. <sup>5</sup> *The LORD and King has unplugged my ears. I've always obeyed him. I haven't turned away from him.* <sup>6</sup> I let my enemies beat me on my bare back. I let them pull the hair out of my beard. I didn't turn my face away when they made fun of me and spit on me. <sup>7</sup> The LORD and King helps me. He won't let me be dishonoured. So I've made up my mind to keep on serving him. I know he won't let me be put to shame. <sup>8</sup> He is near. He will prove I haven't done anything wrong. So who will bring charges against me? Let's face each other in court! Who can bring charges against me? Let him come and face me! <sup>9</sup> The LORD and King helps me. So who will judge me?

*Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.*



## The Epistle Reading: Philippians 2:5-11



*A reading from Philippians chapter 2 beginning at verse 5.*

<sup>5</sup> As you deal with one another, you should think and act as Jesus did. <sup>6</sup> In his very nature he was God. Jesus was equal with God. But Jesus didn't take advantage of that fact. <sup>7</sup> Instead, he made himself nothing. He did this by taking on the nature of a servant. He was made just like human beings. <sup>8</sup> He appeared as a man. He was humble and obeyed God completely. He did this even though it led to his death. Even worse, he died on a cross! <sup>9</sup> So God lifted him up to the highest place. God gave him the name that is above every name. <sup>10</sup> *When the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone will kneel down to worship him. Everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will kneel down to worship him. Everyone's mouth will say that Jesus Christ is Lord. And God the Father will receive the glory.* <sup>11</sup>

*Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.*



## The Gospel Reading: Mark 15:1-39



*The Holy Gospel according to Mark chapter 15 beginning at verse 1.  
Praise and Glory to God.*

### Jesus is Brought to Pilate

<sup>1</sup> It was very early in the morning. The chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law, and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they tied Jesus up and led him away. Then they handed him over to Pilate.

<sup>2</sup> "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate.

"You have said so," Jesus replied.

[ CONTINUED OVER PAGE ]

<sup>3</sup> The chief priests brought many charges against him. <sup>4</sup> So Pilate asked him again, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they charge you with."

<sup>5</sup> But Jesus still did not reply. Pilate was amazed.

<sup>6</sup> It was the usual practice at the Passover Feast to let one prisoner go free. The people could choose the one they wanted. <sup>7</sup> A man named Barabbas was in prison. He was there with some other people who had fought against the country's rulers. They had committed murder while they were fighting against the rulers. <sup>8</sup> The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

<sup>9</sup> "Do you want me to let the king of the Jews go free?" asked Pilate. <sup>10</sup> He knew that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him because they wanted to get their own way.

<sup>11</sup> But the chief priests stirred up the crowd. So the crowd asked Pilate to let Barabbas go free instead.

<sup>12</sup> "Then what should I do with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them.

<sup>13</sup> "Crucify him!" the crowd shouted.

<sup>14</sup> "Why? What wrong has he done?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted even louder, "Crucify him!"

<sup>15</sup> Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd. So he let Barabbas go free. He ordered that Jesus be whipped. Then he handed him over to be nailed to a cross.

### **The Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus**

<sup>16</sup> The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace. It was called the Praetorium. They called together the whole company of soldiers. <sup>17</sup> The soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they twisted thorns together to make a crown. They placed it on his head. <sup>18</sup> They began to call out to him, "We honour you, king of the Jews!" <sup>19</sup> Again and again they hit him on the head with a stick. They spit on him. They fell on their knees and pretended to honour him. <sup>20</sup> After they had made fun of him, they took off the purple robe. They put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to nail him to a cross.

### **Jesus is Nailed to a Cross**

<sup>21</sup> A man named Simon was passing by. He was from Cyrene. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Simon was on his way in from the country. The soldiers forced him to carry the cross. <sup>22</sup> They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha. The word Golgotha means the Place of the Skull. <sup>23</sup> Then they gave him wine mixed with spices. But he did not take it. <sup>24</sup> They nailed him to the cross. Then they divided up his clothes. They cast lots to see what each of them would get.

<sup>25</sup> It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup> They wrote out the charge against him. It read, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

<sup>27-28</sup> They crucified with him two rebels against Rome. One was on his right and one was on his left. <sup>29</sup> Those who passed by shouted at Jesus and made fun of him. They shook their heads and said, "So you are going to destroy the temple and build it again in three days?" <sup>30</sup> Then come down from the cross! Save yourself!" <sup>31</sup> In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law made fun of him among themselves. "He saved others," they said. "But he can't save himself!" <sup>32</sup> Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross! When we see that, we will believe." Those who were being crucified with Jesus also made fun of him.

### **Jesus Dies**

<sup>33</sup> At noon, darkness covered the whole land. It lasted three hours. <sup>34</sup> At three o'clock in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" This means "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" (Psalm 22:1)

<sup>35</sup> Some of those standing nearby heard Jesus cry out. They said, "Listen! He's calling for Elijah."

<sup>36</sup> Someone ran and filled a sponge with wine vinegar. He put it on a stick. He offered it to Jesus to drink. "Leave him alone," he said. "Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down."

<sup>37</sup> *With a loud cry, Jesus took his last breath.*

<sup>38</sup> The temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup> A Roman commander was standing there in front of Jesus. He saw how Jesus died. Then he said, "This man was surely the Son of God!"

*This is the Gospel of Christ. Praise to Christ, the Word.*