



## Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020 - Palm Sunday

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use on its own, or if you are able to watch the service on social media, to aid following the order of service. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you

### Call to worship

God is our strength and salvation. Let us sing with great joy! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. Let us be glad and rejoice for Jesus Christ is Lord! Give thanks to God for he is good. Let us Praise the name of God for his steadfast love endures forever! AMEN.

Hymn STF 265 Ride on, ride on in majesty!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD9rMkIS1yw>

- 1 Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Hark, all the tribes 'Hosanna!' cry;  
Your humble beast, pursues its road  
with palms and scattered garments strowed.
- 2 Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die:  
O Christ, your triumphs now begin  
o'er captive death and conquered sin.
- 3 Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
The winged squadrons of the sky  
look down with sad and wondering eyes  
to see the approaching sacrifice.
- 4 Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh;  
the Father on his sapphire throne,  
expects his own anointed Son.
- 5 Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die;  
bow your meek head to mortal pain,  
then take, O God, your power, and reign.

### Opening Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Almighty God, as we are led through this week, we will follow, for You are the life we long for, You are the Word that sustains us. We thank you for your son, Jesus Christ, who, giving up all he had and walking the path of obedience He opened the gates of justice and become our king and our salvation. We wave palm branches in anticipation and we lay our cloaks of love before him, to cushion his walk. And when the gates of

joy have been opened to us, we will spend moment by moment, every knee in creation bending, singing our praises to you, God in Community, Holy in One. Together in faith. Loving God, we confess that we never praise you enough, nor serve you well enough, nor love you deeply enough. We try. Yet we falter. Always we fall short. Sometimes we realize our limitations, sometimes we don't. Yet you, Gracious God, go on loving and nurturing us, not counting our faults but multiplying your grace and mercy. Forgive us, when we cling to the excuse of our unworthiness to serve you, forgetting that in Jesus you have cleansed our sin and removed our guilt. Forgive us when we betray the truth of the gospel through our lack of integrity and we do not follow you with our whole hearts. We thank you, for seeing beyond our faults and our fears and empowering us to be new people. Knowing that we are all your children and you are always with us, redeem us now, lift us up once again and set us free. Sisters and brothers, as you trust in Jesus, know that your sins are forgiven and be at peace. We ask all this in your Holy name. AMEN.

And now let us say the prayer that Jesus taught us to say:  
Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.

Matthew 21:1-11

## Reflection

Remember the Chinese proverb boy: 'The longest journey begins with the smallest step'. Mr Haggart intoned - and not for the first time either. It had been a mantra Maynard had become all too familiar with in recent times. And right now, it didn't help one little bit 'Come on boy' My Haggart was shouting, 'Go for it! You have to try. Come on! Make an effort! You'll get nowhere if you don't have a go.'"

It was no use. Maynard had failed again. He just couldn't get started. And as he stood shaking on the little platform at the top of the rope-slide, hanging onto the bar and peering over the edge to what seemed a *long* way down to the ground, Maynard simply lost any bottle he'd ever had. Thankfully, no one mocked him as he made his way down from the platform. My Haggart just sighed a very loud, resigned sigh. That said it all. Maynard had disappointed. Yet again.

He should never have come to the adventure camp with his scout troop. Oh, he was good at other things, like knots and campfire songs and he had lots of badges, like first aid and cooking and he could recite screeds about the history of scouting; and he was a Bob-a Job- week specialist. But Maynard just couldn't do physical stuff for toffee.

He was overweight. He was uncoordinated. He'd fallen off a swing when he was a kid and that hadn't helped his confidence one little bit. But mostly, Maynard was just downright scared. And no amount of encouragement about 'starting with the smallest step' and 'going for it' mad the blind bit of difference. So rope-slides, climbing tress, monkey bars, assault courses were out for Maynard.

The only thing he could manage was swimming. It was probably partly - so his nasty brother had said - because he carried so much blubber he could float away all the way

across the North Sea. But Maynard wasn't going to try *that*, or anything else that required too much of an effort. He couldn't put his head under water - too scar; he always needed his feet to touch the bottom, and wouldn't swim out of his depth - too panicky; he didn't like rough and tumble in the pool - too unpredictable; he couldn't swim a lengthy - well, he could if he tried, but there was no way...too much...too risky. So Maynard swam across the pool at the shallow end, carefully avoiding all the stronger swimmers doing their twenty lengths. Maybe he could do that one day. By Maynard was scared to go for it. So the Scouts' Life Saving Badge' was a no no for Maynard. Other people would have to do the rescuing if someone was in trouble.

That would have been fine if someone else had been around when Digby Matheison fell into the river. He wasn't supposed to fall into the river, of course, because Digby was one of the best behaved and most ultra careful boys in the troop. And anyway, he'd broken his shoulder and wrist the previous week when he'd fallen off his bike and he had his arm in plaster and hanging in a sling. It was touch and go whether he'd be allowed to come to the camp. Be he'd promised to behave and there was no problem there for Digby. And My Haggard and the other troop leaders had promised to look after them. No problem there either.

Once Maynard had been let off trying the top-slide, and with Digby incapacitated down one side, the two lads were dispatched along the river bank to collect wood for the campfire. Maynard carried the big canvas sack. Digby held the small ace. And a sufficient quantity of suitable firewood was duly collected. Maynard hoisted the full sack on his back - that's what big lads are for, isn't it? And the two pals were ambling back to the campsite when the fox came shooting out of the undergrowth. The two Scouts got such a fright that Maynard swung round in the direction the fox had run, and clobbered his unprepared companion full on his bad shoulder with the sack of firewood. Digby screamed in pain, staggered backwards to escape the menacing Maynard, and fell right off the edge of the path into the river.

Within moments he was thrashing about in the water. Completely incapacitated by his injured arm, he tried to reach for the grass on the bank with his good hand. But he was too far away. The more he tried and failed, the more he panicked. The more he panicked, the more he thrashed about. And the more he thrashed about, the more he was taking in water.

Maynard was panicking too. What was he to do? Should he run back to the camp for help? Too far, and he'd never make it anyway. Could he find a stick that was long enough for Digby to catch on to? Nothing obvious was lying around. Maynard looked at his struggling friend, and he heard a voice in his head shouting 'Come on boy, go for it!' and in an instant he'd leapt into the water

He didn't know what he was supposed to do. The water would be over his head. He'd sink without a trace. They'd both go down together. But to Maynard's surprise...he found that he was standing upright, with his feet firmly on the river bed and the water no more than up to his waist. Digby was grabbing onto his arm, and then he was gripping Maynard's waistband. 'Steady on! You'll have my trousers off!' was all Maynard could think of saying. But pretty soon two wet scouts were struggling the two-path and neither was quite sure who was helping the other.

What they were sure of though was that they had a great story to tell round the campfire that night. And, when the truth came out, Mr Haggart called Maynard out

front with following night and with great ceremony presented him with a new badge - which looked suspiciously like something cut from an old tea towel and written on with felt tip pen, which proudly reminded Maynard that there might be more times like this one when he could 'Go for it.'

Being a Christian means that God demands difficult things from us which sometimes we feel are out of our means, our capabilities and skills. But God never lets us down. And sometimes the challenge is difficult. Whether God calls us to jump into a river, to stand up against injustice or to speak the truth. Or simply to admit to being a Christian rather than being ashamed, God calls us to 'Go for it.'

On Palm Sunday when Christ entered into Jerusalem knowing the pain and agony that lay before him. Yet, he did not sway, he did not take an alternative. He did what was required of him obediently and humbly. As Christ prepared to walk the road to Calvary, there is nothing that God calls us to do which is harder than that.

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Hymn STF 276 Lift High the Cross  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbcBXYP4AIE>

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
till all the world adore his sacred name.*

- 1 Follow the path on which our Captain trod,  
our King victorious, Christ the Son of God:
- 2 Each new-born soldier of the Crucified  
bears on their brow the seal of him who died:
- 3 Led on their way by this triumphant sign,  
the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine:
- 4 From farthest regions let them homage bring,  
and on his cross adore their Saviour King:
- 5 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
as thou has promised, draw the world to thee:
- 6 Set up thy throne, that earth's despair may cease  
beneath the shadow of its healing peace:

## **Blessing and Benediction**

May God keep you from harm; May Christ Jesus lead you through the gates of justice;  
And may the Holy Spirit fill you with joy so you may praise Christ the King.

May the Blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us  
always. AMEN.