

**BREAKING BREAD– JESUS ENABLES US
TO THRIVE TOGETHER.**

TEXT: Matthew 21 : 1-11.

THEME: Jesus – The power to thrive together.

**Grace, peace, and mercy, from God the Father,
and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

As we continue to go through the Discipleship / Fellowship theme; this week's theme is concentrating on Jesus; *as the power to thrive together.*

I guess that whenever I personally try to look, study and get a grasp of who Jesus is, through whatever critical analysis I choose to view him with, he always comes up as an incredible person. Jesus is full of surprises and never ceases to amaze me whatever the situation I read that he's him. Not only

do I read about him, but I also have a personal relationship with him that is constant.

I am not surprised that whatever he *ever* did, there were more than one meaning to his actions. Even though Jesus walked in the flesh amongst his people a few thousand years ago, those actions still stand up to scrutiny by anyone in this day and age who wants to study him.

I guess that as humans, we like to think that we are clever and smart in what we do, say and believe. A lot of us are like that in many respects, but we don't measure up to Jesus and his standards because he is perfect.

Not many people are remembered from their lifetime unless something was written and kept in the history books; otherwise they would be forgotten like all people whoever lived. This is not so with Jesus, if nothing was ever written about him

[the Bible], and because of the impact he had in the world, I'm sure the Oral Tradition would have kept his life and deeds alive today.

So in today's gospel lesson; Jesus is having an impact on the people in Jerusalem. Even though 'The triumphal entry' into Jerusalem was prophesied many years before it became a reality. And what an entry it was, it had all the hallmarks and celebration of a humble king being paraded through the streets; with many people lining them and cheering him on.

They were paying him homage and respect as he did so; thereby giving him his rightful blessing and honour [saying; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord] as he rode through the streets of Jerusalem. What a lovely welcome and entry his own personal procession had; as he rode into this place.

And all is well until we read in verse ten, 'And when he entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?"' It seems that the final end of the procession is a real anticlimax. Even though the people of the city, join in quite happily with the crowds until something hits them that they don't actually know why they are cheering wildly for this man. So they start asking the question, 'who is this man?' It dawns upon some or a lot of them; to suddenly realize that they don't know who he is.

Have you ever witnessed a situation like that somewhere in your life? It doesn't particularly have to be about Jesus, but something like this may have occurred in a parade in another town or another country perhaps, where you may only have been passing through. So you go and take a look/see to find out what's going on; to see what it's all about!

The Bible stories tell us that a lot of people knew about Jesus, that they loved him and wanted to

make him king. On those particular occasions though, Jesus had to tell them to keep quiet in order that he accomplish his Father's will which he came to do. They also wanted to make him known all over the place; just like you and I want to make him known in the world and society in which we live. We know that without Jesus in our lives we are nothing! We need a Saviour because we can't save ourselves or live in our own goodness and self; we all fall short of the glory of God.

In this particular gospel reading we find that for a short space of time Jesus was accorded all the praise, glory and honour that should have been given to him in any case; because he is deserving of it after all. Didn't he, after all; come as God in the flesh, even though a lot of people [even now] found that hard to believe.

In that short space of time, Jesus and all those gathered there *thrived* in this situation. Sadly

though, after this time passes; we all know that the beginning of the Passion period is not too far away. But considering all this though; this was one of the ways that he could make all people and future generations of the world, come to understand the why, where and when; Jesus came to do his Father's will upon the earth.

I want to ask a question in two ways. '*Collectively as Christians* in this world, are we thriving?' Yes and No! It can go either way, but mainly yes, because with all the other religious denominations who claim to be and are Christian in this world, we all collectively *do* make a difference to a lot of people.

Are we thriving *because we are Christians*? Yes and No! Once again it can go either way, but mainly yes, because Christians have not yet been silenced about their faith in Christ all together. Satan has done his best to silence God's people, but the

darkness of evil has not yet put out the light of Christianity in this world.

Just like the people who cheered and threw their cloaks and put palm branches in the path of Jesus, as he rode through the streets of Jerusalem, we are free to honour, adore and love him for who he is.

He is our humble king and Saviour. Then again, we are not to love him only for a *short* time [i.e. like for instance, the duration of his ride through the streets of Jerusalem], but to love him for *all* time, for all eternity. Jesus should remain the 'flavour of the month' in our lives forever. And today's lesson is to thrive with him in his life and what he brings to us in our lives.

So how did Jesus actually thrive in his life upon the earth? By simply being the Saviour in this world! To free and release people from their sin and oppression, and he done this with whomever he

came into contact with; and especially if they wanted it.

We wanted it, that's why we are here worshipping him today. He came so that people may live and be set free from all their afflictions. Let's look at a few recent gospel examples; over the last three weeks we had:- **The Samaritan Woman; The Man born blind; and The Death of Lazarus.**

In the Samaritan Woman's case at the well; Jesus thrived and she thrived because, he knew about her past trouble in the matrimonial stakes. He confronted her about it and she acknowledged that only a prophet had that much knowledge about her life.

Also that she also knew and heard, that one day the 'Messiah' that would come. Jesus offered her to drink of the 'living water' so that she may never thirst again. He set her free, and in her newfound

joy; she went and told the whole town and brought them out to see the Messiah. These townspeople were then free to tell whoever came into their Samaritan town about Jesus and what he done for them.

In the case of the Man born Blind; Jesus thrived and he thrived because, he was born so that God may be glorified. He was set free from his bondage to blindness. What he saw may have shocked him initially; mainly because of the Pharisees attitude to his healing occurring on the Sabbath. But overall; he was set free to tell all whom he came into contact with; that Jesus had set him free from his affliction of blindness.

In the case of the Death of Lazarus; Jesus thrived and Lazarus thrived because, Lazarus got to live again. He also got to die again, perhaps this time at a ripe old age. But those who were there to comfort Mary and Martha witnessed first hand the freeing

power of Jesus. Death was no barrier to him. Those witnesses, who were there, were all able to tell whomever they came into contact with, about what Jesus had done for his close friends Mary, Martha and especially the recently deceased and brought-back-to-life Lazarus. They were all able to thrive from this occasion. And all those present were able to tell of the wonderful thing that Jesus had done there that day.

So how does that affect us; and how can we thrive through having Jesus in our lives? **One answer can be found in verse five: "See your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey."** Jesus is coming to us, to where we are at. We need to understand that.

He came to us in our Baptism and he comes to us in Holy Communion. All we have to do is to receive him, with a proper heart and mind attitude. This may involve some adjustments and life changes but

that is par for the course. That doesn't mean we start ignoring friends and family to the point where we leave or put them out of our lives completely. We can encourage them to share our beliefs with us so that we all come into the loving environment and community of God. If Jesus can come to us, then he can come to them. There is hope for all of us.

Also in verse eleven: The crowds answered, 'This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.' They got that right, because he is the one whom we all serve, believe and have faith in.

We know who he is and in return he knows his own; he knows each and every one of his sheep. He knows us personally. Because we have identified with him, he has identified with us. Together, we will all thrive together on this earth and for all eternity because we have accepted and believed that we can live and thrive with him forever. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.