



Sunday 13 April 2025

Palm Sunday

Why God uses mementos to remind us of His faithfulness

Main Point:

The palm cross we receive on Palm Sunday is more than a symbol—it is a powerful memento that reminds us of God's **Promise**, Christ's **Acceptance** of His mission, His great **Love** for us, and the **Mercy** He showed through His sacrifice. Like the stones set up by God's people in Scripture, this cross helps us remember the depth of God's faithfulness and grace in our own journey of faith.

Intro |

Are you a person who collects mementos of your travels?

I didn't realise I was, until my mother reminded me of my 'rock collection' I had as a little girl. Whenever we travelled somewhere – and we travelled quite a bit – I would pick up a stone or a rock, put it in my pocket and take it home!

My rock collection became so well known amongst relatives and friends of the family, that whenever they went somewhere special, they would also collect a stone and bring it home for me! I ended up having stones from all kinds of places, such as Antarctica, Peru and the Islands.

You may have picked up that I love stones. Do you remember when I first came to Southlakes, during COVID, I painted stones for us to leave as blessings around our neighbourhood?

There is something beautiful and solid about a stone, and finding one with a special shape or colour, makes you feel like you've found something precious.

Now, I'm not the first to find rocks and stones important.

As you probably know, I read my Bible each morning and the readings are divided into an Old Testament passage, a portion from the Gospels, a psalm, and a new testament passage.

Well, the other morning I was reading along, and I came to the part in Joshua when God's people were about to enter into the Promised Land.

They had miraculously crossed the Jordan River, in epic Hollywood proportions, I might add ... to remind God's people of this most amazing event, Joshua took 12 stones and set them up as a memorial right in the middle of the Jordan River!

Point 1 | God's people needed memorials to remind them of God's power, faithfulness and holy requirements.

They were positioned in the exact location where the priests had stood with the Ark of the Covenant in the middle of the Jordan River, before the waters returned to their normal position.

He also set up another 12 stones on the shore at Gilgal. We read,

"He did this so all the nations of the earth might know that the LORD's hand is powerful, and so you might fear the LORD your God forever." (Joshua 4:24)

Now, the act of setting up stones was a common biblical practice for creating memorials or altars (see Genesis 28:18, 31:45).

In fact, when Joshua read out God's law to His people just before they were about to enter into the promised land, he said,

"This stone has heard everything the LORD said to us. It will be a witness to testify against you if you go back on your word to God." (Joshua 24:27)

So, this act of building a monument to remember an important event goes back a long way.

And even in our modern world, we still use mementos to act as reminders.

While I don't think many of you would tie a piece of string around your finger to remind you of an important event ... that ring on your finger, if you're married, is there to remind you of your covenant promises you made to your spouse all those years ago.

Point 2 | We need mementos to remind us of God's power, faithfulness and all that He has done for us.

Can you think of some other mementos in your life that remind you of important truths or events?

Souvenirs act as mementos, heirlooms are mementos which carry family, photographs, letters, etc.

For my parents wedding anniversary we had all their slides converted into digital photos, and my sister and I have been having an amazing time looking at photos of our childhood.

Well today, you have been given a memento to mark today's celebration of the commencement of Holy Week!

Yes, that little palm cross, freshly made by Elizabeth and I and others, is a memento – it exists to remind us of several important truths, we'll do well never to forget.

We need mementos, because unfortunately we are forgetful people. It is easy for us to forget God's faithfulness when we face difficulties or challenging situations.

So, what does this little Palm cross remind us of?

It reminds us of both the triumph and the cost of love.

Point 3 | Our Palm Cross reminds us of God's eternal PROMISE, Christ's ACCEPTANCE of His Father's will, Christ's personal LOVE for each of us and God's MERCY in forgiving us of our wrongdoings.

We can use the letters **P.A.L.M.** to reflect on the deeper truths it represents:

P – Promise:

The cross reminds us of God's eternal promise—to send a Saviour who would redeem humanity. Jesus fulfilled this promise by laying down His life so that we might be reconciled with God. The palm cross is a sign that God keeps His promises, no matter the cost.

A – Acceptance:

Jesus willingly accepted the path set before Him. He rode into Jerusalem, not as a warrior king, but as a humble servant. His acceptance of the Father's will is a powerful example of obedience and love.

L – Love:

At the heart of the cross is love—sacrificial, selfless, and unconditional. "For God so loved the world

that He gave His only Son" (John 3:16). The palm cross reminds us that we are deeply loved, not because of what we have done or do, but because of who God is.

M – Mercy:

The cross is where mercy triumphed over judgment. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we receive forgiveness and new life. The palm cross points to that incredible mercy extended to all.

Application | Use your Palm Cross as a reminder of God's promise, acceptance, love and mercy

So, as you hold your palm cross, may it remind you of the **Promise, Acceptance, Love, and Mercy** shown through Christ's sacrifice—a gift of grace for the whole world.

Keep this little Palm Cross in your Bible, perhaps using it as a bookmark so it travels along with you as you read God's word each day.

Each day, as you open your Bible to read God's love letter to you, may you remember God's **Promise, Acceptance, Love, and Mercy** shown through Christ's sacrifice to you personally.

Let's pray,

Lord Jesus,

As I hold this simple palm cross in my hand, I pause to remember the depth of your love. You entered Jerusalem knowing what lay ahead—the suffering, the cross, the weight of the world's sin—and still, you came.

Thank you for your obedience, for accepting the Father's will, for choosing mercy over judgment, and for offering yourself in my place.

*This palm cross, though small and fragile, speaks of a love stronger than death and a hope that cannot be shaken. May it remind me daily of the **Promise** you fulfilled, the **Acceptance** of your calling, the **Love** you poured out, and the **Mercy** you freely give.*

Let its presence stir in me a heart of gratitude. Teach me to follow in your footsteps—with humility, with courage, and with love. As the crowds once laid palm branches at your feet, I lay my life before you now, offering all I am in response to all you've done.

Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Amen.

Discussion and Personal Reflection Questions:

1. **How do I welcome Jesus into my life today?**

Just as the crowds welcomed Him with palm branches and shouts of "Hosanna," am I inviting Him into every area of my heart—with joy, humility, and surrender?

2. **Am I willing to follow Jesus, even when the road leads to the cross?**

Palm Sunday begins a journey toward the suffering of Good Friday. Am I only drawn to Jesus when it's easy, or am I also willing to walk with Him through times of sacrifice and surrender?

3. **What parts of my life need to be laid down before Jesus?**

The crowds laid their cloaks on the road in honour of the King. What attitudes, fears, or habits might I need to lay down at His feet in worship and trust?

4. **How do I respond to the love and mercy Jesus has shown me?**

Reflecting on His sacrifice, how is my daily life shaped by gratitude, obedience, and love for others?

5. **What does this Holy Week mean for my personal faith journey?**

As I move through this sacred time, how is God inviting me to grow deeper in faith, closer in relationship with Him, and more aligned with His purposes?