



Sunday, 29 March 2026

# Palm Sunday

## *The Irony of Palm Sunday: Faith in a Contradictory World*

Life is full of irony, isn't it?

We encounter it every day — those little contradictions that are almost too human to explain.

We call this the 'sunburnt country,' yet half the time we complain it's too cloudy to dry the washing — and the other half that it's too hot to go outside! We say 'no worries' when we've got plenty to worry about — and 'she'll be right' when she clearly isn't!" We drive on the left, but the *right* of way is often anyone's guess. We call it a 'smartphone,' but it often makes us feel dumber by the minute. We talk about "rush hour" while sitting completely still in traffic.

Irony makes us laugh, but it also makes us think. It pulls us up short. It shows us that life is rarely neat or simple, that truth often hides within contradiction.

And there are other ironies, more serious ones, that shape daily living. We have more ways to communicate than at any point in human history — yet loneliness is described as an epidemic. We own time-saving technology — yet we're busier than ever. We have more knowledge — but often feel less certain. We have more wealth than past generations — yet people report feeling less secure about their future.

So much of modern life is made of tensions and contrasts — of truth and confusion, confidence and anxiety, expectation and doubt. Palm Sunday is a story just like that. It's the Bible's reminder that God often speaks through irony — through contrasts that reveal who He is and who we are.

### **Point 1 | The Irony of Triumph and Tragedy**

At first glance, Palm Sunday looks like a triumph. The crowds cheer, the cloaks and palms line the road, and Jerusalem seems ready to welcome its long-awaited King. "Hosanna!" they shout —

“Save us!” But within days, the same voices will cry, “Crucify Him.” The parade leads not to a throne but to a cross. The very people rejoicing in deliverance will reject the way it comes.

It’s ironic, isn’t it? The Messiah enters in peace, and they call for war. The Saviour comes in love, and they demand power. The crowd’s expectation is our own temptation — to seek a Messiah who fits our agenda. We love the idea of salvation, but not always the shape it takes. We love victory, but shy away from vulnerability. We pray for peace, but cling to control.

Palm Sunday invites us to see where our cheers sometimes hide condition — I’ll follow You, Lord, as long as you fix things my way. And yet, the Servant King still rides on, knowing that our fickle praise will fail Him — and loving us just the same.

## **Point 2 | The Irony of Worship and Wandering**

It’s easy to point fingers at that ancient crowd — but their story is our story, too. Palm Sunday exposes one of the great ironies of spiritual life: we can declare loyalty to God one moment and go completely off course the next. We worship on Sunday and wander off by Wednesday.

We mean well — our singing, our prayers, our commitments are genuine — yet they don’t always reach Monday morning stress or Friday fatigue. Most of us have promised at some point, “Lord, I’ll trust you this time,” only to pick our worries right back up again. We invite Jesus to lead, then argue about the directions He gives.

But notice something in the Gospel story: Jesus doesn’t turn His donkey around because the crowd’s faith is shallow. He rides on. He knows their worship will soon wander — but still, He goes. That tells us something profound. God’s faithfulness doesn’t depend on our consistency; our confidence depends on His constancy.

## **Point 3 | The Irony of Noise and Silence**

The Passion narrative moves from cheering crowds to shouting mobs, from noisy accusation to political uproar. Pilate barks out questions, the soldiers hurl out mocks, the crowd jeers — everyone seems to be talking except Jesus. And His silence is deafening. It’s baffling, the very voice that spoke creation into being now refuses to defend Himself. That’s the great irony of the cross: heaven’s answer to chaos isn’t louder chaos — it’s calm confidence.

In our world, silence can feel awkward, even weak. When someone criticises us, we naturally want to respond. When life feels uncertain, we fill the air with noise, with analysis, with endless scrolling, or background commentary. Stillness makes us nervous because it confronts our helplessness.

But Jesus’ silence isn’t helplessness — it’s trust. He refuses to be drawn into fear because He knows His Father is faithful. This week, amid the soundtrack of a noisy, anxious world, perhaps we might learn again the strength of silence — the stillness that listens instead of reacts, that trusts instead of trembles.

## **Point 4 | The Irony of Betrayal and Grace**

The story of Holy Week moves quickly from blessings to betrayals. One disciple sells his friendship for silver. Another denies even knowing Jesus. The rest scatter in fear. Only a few women stay near the cross. If ever there was a time for Jesus to give up on people, this was it.

But He doesn't. That's the astonishing reversal at the heart of the Gospel: we fail, God remains faithful. We hear our Saviour cry, "*Father, forgive them,*" That prayer isn't just for the soldiers standing there — it's for us, too. For every time we've chosen convenience over courage. For every promise made and broken. For every moment of silence when the Spirit prompted us to speak.

We often talk about grace as unearned favour. Palm Sunday shows us the cost of that grace — love that keeps moving forward even as it is rejected. That kind of mercy is not sentimental; it's costly, courageous love. And it still finds us in our own contradictions.

### **Point 5 | The Irony of Power in Surrender**

Nothing reveals God's strange wisdom like the cross. The world believes power is control; God shows that power is surrender. The world says victory means avoiding pain; Jesus shows victory comes through faithfulness in pain. The world shouts its dominance; God's Spirit whispers deliverance.

When Jesus is lifted up on the cross, the irony deepens — the sign above His head says, "*King of the Jews.*" Although written to mock Him, it declares the truth He came to reveal. At the cross, weakness wins, because God's love never ceases. And that is perhaps the central paradox of Christian faith.

We gain life by giving it away. We win by serving. We lead by putting ourselves last. We find our peace not by grasping for safety but by entrusting ourselves entirely to God. That's the pattern of Palm Sunday and the whole Gospel story — and it's meant to shape our lives.

### **Point 6 | The Irony of the Modern Heart**

We say we believe in God's power, yet live as if everything depends on us. We talk about grace but measure ourselves and others by performance. We affirm peace but give into anxiety and worry. We proclaim trust in God but run ourselves into exhaustion trying to maintain control. And maybe — just maybe — that's where Palm Sunday finds us again this year: anxious about the world, stretched between headlines and hope.

We hear of wars and rumours of wars — conflict spreading between Israel, Iran, and Gaza, the ongoing trauma in Ukraine — and feel, deep down, that fear is creeping closer. Prices rise, futures tremble, hearts grow weary. We want safety, stability, sense — but the Gospel reminds us that peace doesn't come from certainty. It comes from trusting in a faithful God.

Standing before Pilate, Jesus doesn't panic or argue. His calmness is the picture of real trust — the kind that doesn't need to control the outcome. That's the peace we're called to live with — a peace that doesn't come from predictable lives, but from knowing God can be trusted whatever comes our way.

### **Point 7 | Living Within Our Contradictions**

God knows that we're full of contrasts. We believe and doubt, love and fear, obey and resist — sometimes all on the same day. The miracle of the Gospel is that God meets us where we are — not waiting until the contradictions are gone, but loving us through them.

Palm Sunday reminds us that grace moves through imperfection. We don't need to pretend we always have it together. We only need to keep walking beside the King who rides toward the cross — trusting that His strength will hold where ours gives out.

Faith isn't about being flawless; it's about being honest. And honesty is where transformation begins.

### **Conclusion: The Irony That Saves**

So, friends — may this Palm Sunday remind us that the journey of faith is full of irony: joy and sorrow intertwined, conviction and confusion walking hand in hand, shouts of hope echoing across the same hearts that sometimes fall silent. And yet, through it all, the Servant King keeps riding — not away from us, but toward us. May His quiet confidence become our confidence. May His peace become our peace. And may His love, stronger than shame, lead us through every contradiction into the resurrection life Jesus died to give.

### *Closing Prayer*

Heavenly Father, On this Palm Sunday we thank you for sending your Son to walk toward the cross with steady love. You see our mixed hearts — our belief and our doubt, our praise and our fear — and yet your Son keeps riding toward us in grace.

Teach us to trust you when life feels uncertain, to find calm not in circumstances but in your faithfulness. May your peace hold us through this Holy Week, and your love guide us beyond all our contradictions. **Amen.**

### *Reflection Questions*

1. Palm Sunday shows a crowd who wanted a Saviour on their own terms.  
Where in my life do I still want God to *fit my plan* rather than surrendering to His? What would it look like to trust Him even when I don't understand His timing or way?
2. Palm Sunday exposes how quickly praise can fade into forgetfulness.  
When do I most easily lose sight of my devotion or drift away from what I believe? What rhythm, habit, or practice might help me keep my faith steady through the week, not just on Sundays?
3. Jesus stood silent before Pilate — silent but strong.  
Where am I letting the world's noise—or my own inner noise—drown out God's quiet voice? How might I create space for silence and stillness to deepen my trust?
4. In the Passion story, those who failed Jesus were the first to experience His forgiveness.  
When have I needed that same grace? Is there anyone I need to forgive — or an old failure I need to let go of — so that grace can do its healing work?
5. The cross shows that strength and peace come not from control, but from surrender. What does surrender look like for me right now? Where might God be inviting me to trust His faithfulness more deeply than my own ability to manage or plan?