

## *Jesus - Who Is He?*

(Preached by Cheryl Williams and others on Palm Sunday – Footscray Baptist Church March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

Today on the streets of Australia many will gather for a rally and peace march. People will gather from all walks of life, to make a stand for peace. The focus this year will be on asylum seekers, the theme, 'Time for a Home'. Rallying on this day goes all the way back to Jesus and that first Palm Sunday when he entered Jerusalem on a donkey.

As the people welcomed Jesus into the city, they all had very different expectations, thoughts, hopes and dreams.

For some he was a political leader come to liberate them. For others he was just another troublemaker. Some thought he was a marvellous worker of great wonders. Others saw him as a visionary. For some he was their friend or relative. And some believed he was the Messiah, the Son of God.

Jesus was all of those things and more.

In much the same way as those crowds on that first Palm Sunday, we too, have different views or emphasises of who Jesus was and what was inspirational about him.

I wonder what your favourite story about Jesus is? Why do you like it and what does it reveal about Jesus?

My favourite stories involve the way Jesus related to women. In the story of the Canaanite Woman, she actually rebukes him and says that if he has only come for one group of people, then that is not good enough! Jesus allows himself to be challenged and is changed by her logic, argument and circumstance. In another story, a woman is healed by touching his cloak – in some respects that is enough for her and for Jesus' disciples, but, Jesus wants to know who she is, he wants to form some kind of relationship with her, he seeks the face of a nameless, ill woman. My final story is about Mary and Martha and the tensions developing between them when Jesus visits. Jesus tells Martha, that Mary, has chosen the better path. This at first, looks like, he is taking Mary's side in the dispute. But Jesus is doing something much more radical – he is

inviting Martha to come and join Mary and sit by him and learn, learn from the Rabbi or teacher – this is something women were forbidden to do, yet Jesus invites them to sit and learn. Jesus, it seems to me, gave people dignity and was incredibly radical.

Perhaps your favourite is, the story of the lost sheep. Jesus is the one who cares for us all and will go looking us so that we might know we are cared for. Perhaps your favourite is, when Jesus feeds the 5000 - Jesus is not afraid to accept help from a little boy. Jesus feeds both the crowd's stomachs and their hearts and minds. There is always enough – there was much left over, an abundance in fact.

I have asked some others to share their favourite stories.

- Marlene
- Grace
- Ros

Would anyone else like to share a favourite story of Jesus? (*Stories from the congregation*)

Jesus did many things, meant many different things to different people. However, he took his mission to share God's love and bring in God's kingdom very seriously. So seriously he didn't run from the events that we will recall this week – the Last Supper, Betrayal, Arrest & Trial, Denial and finally Death on a Cross. I pray that this week might be very special as you take that journey with Jesus. Amen.