



THE GRAPEVINE – Issue 52: 28th March 2021

Dear Friends,

Holy Week is a week of destiny that is full of paradox. On Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem to the shouts and praises of many - "Hosanna to the son of David!" They were looking for a warrior king, but he came proclaiming a rule of peace, not violence. His action in the temple and with the fig tree proclaimed God's judgement on corrupt religious and national systems, bore no fruit. Many who proclaimed Jesus as King on that Sunday with the shouts of "Hosanna!" shouted 'Crucify him!' on Friday.

"God demonstrates his own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

We see the love of Jesus in the humility with which he washes his disciples' feet, even washing the feet of Judas when he knew that he was about to betray him. What love is this? It is amazing love, sacrificial love, selfless love, rescuing love! It is a love that surpasses all knowledge, a love that pays the price. We see the love of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (which means 'olive press'), where he agonised before his Father, while his friends slept. It was as if the love was been pressed out of him like the oil pressed from olives. We see the love of Jesus at Calvary - an all-embracing love.

'This is how much God loved the world: He gave His Son, His one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in Him anyone can have a whole and lasting life.' John 3:16 The Message'

The hymn writer Robert Lowry wrote:

*Here is love, vast as the ocean,
loving-kindness as the flood;
When the Prince of Life my ransom,
shed for me His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing His praise?
He shall never be forgotten,
through heaven's everlasting days.*

*On the mount of crucifixion,
fountains opened deep and wide,
Through the flood-gates of God's mercy,
flowed the vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love like mighty rivers
poured incessant from above,
And heaven's peace and perfect justice
kissed a guilty world in love.*

Yet it is also a very personal love. Graham Kendrick wrote in a song:

**Amazing love, O what sacrifice. The Son of God, given for me.
My debt he pays and my death he dies, that I might live.'**

Through Holy Week we celebrate the love of God demonstrated to us through Jesus. As we follow him through the week of destiny and are reminded of the depths of his agony, let us fix our eyes upon him, the author and finisher of our faith, and let us raise our heads as we see beyond his suffering to his victory on the Cross and to his glorious resurrection. In gratitude we move from "Hosanna" through "Crucify Him!" to "The Lord is Risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!".

May God's richest blessing be yours this Easter!

