

Who can believe we've reached the Easter holidays again, time just seems to keep ploughing on and we do our best to hang on and keep up until we get to times of the year like this, and we all say, can't wait for next week; can't wait to get a break; a holiday.

That's good, we all need a holiday. So much so that God created a rhythm to life that means we look forward to a break. We work six days out of seven, looking forward to our day off. We work from one festival such as Easter or Christmas to the next and we look forward to a break. God even built into our lives the rhythm of a sabbatical once every seven years.

That longing for a break is God given: but it is more than just a longing for a holiday. This rhythm is also about remembering who God is and what he has done for us. Which is more important than the break.

We come to church on our day off because the only place we can find true rest from the busyness of life is in the presence of God, worshiping God. At the heart of our Christmas and Easter holidays as well as the harvest festival is thanksgiving and celebration of God's goodness, his mercy, his salvation. It is only in God we find real rest and recuperation.

This is why we'll be using this Easter period to remind ourselves of everything we gain; everything God has given to us because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's only in truly remembering and **trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ** that we find rest not only for our bodies, but our souls. On Easter Sunday we'll talk about the power of the resurrection to change lives; Good Friday the hope of the cross that enables us to look beyond the things that weary us; today, Palm Sunday, we remember the **confidence** we have in Christ as our King and High Priest.

Whether we like it or not life is full of decisions: Should I do this or that. Will I opt for this career choice or that one; will I pick these subjects for A-level or those; will I attend this church or that church; will I give myself completely to Christ or will I submit to another.

The writer to the Hebrews, quoting from Psalm 95 said: **Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.** (Hebrews 4:7) What the writer was saying to this church was quite simply, do you have the **confidence in Christ** that means you trust him as your King and your High Priest.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem that first Palm Sunday he was acclaimed as a **royal King. Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.** (Zechariah 9:9)

The voice that the writer to Hebrews wanted to know if we could hear, is the one that tells us **Christ is our King.** Do we have the **confidence** to listen to that voice, the **confidence** to submit to our **king**, to give our lives to our **king**?

This **King** the writer to the Hebrews speaks of, is like no other **king.** *In just a few weeks King Charles the third will be crowned. Many will declare their allegiance, we all I am sure have already sung our consent that he be king and declared him worthy. I'm not sure I've sung the national anthem as often as I have this year. Many believe Charles will be a good king, they look forward to the new Carolean era.*

No matter how good a **king** Charles becomes he will never be a **king**, or even as head of the Church of England, a high priest who can fully sympathise with how we live our lives. He is far removed from us, and some might say reality; that's what it is to be royal, that is actually what we look for in royalty.

Yet Christ is a very different **King**, a very different high priest: **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every, just as we are – yet he did not sin.** (Hebrews 4:14) *Charles will never fully understand my life, or yours because he has never lived as we live.* Jesus on the other hand, descended from glory, he became a man, a poor man, despised man, an outcast man and he lived in a good way, he maintained his integrity, he served God first, loved God first, gave of himself, not only in death but in life and so he understands.

He understands who we are, what we are, what we have faced, how we have struggled, how we have failed, what we have achieved, he knows it all. He knows that to get through this life we need his prayers, we need his support, guidance and strength. The writer to the Hebrews said: **During the days of Jesus life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death.** (Hebrews 5:7)

Crucially Jesus not only prayed for himself, but he also prayed for all who would follow him: **My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.** (John 17:20) Jesus' prayers were not only offered when he was here on earth, but he continues to offer prayers on our behalf: **Who then is the one who condemns? No-one. Christ Jesus who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.** (Romans 8:34)

The writer to the Hebrews is painting the picture of a **King**, a High Priest in whom we can place our confidence. The thing about confidence is that we can appear to give it but in reality, hold back in keyways. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the people cried: **Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!** (John 12:13)

Their cry was a conditional cry. Feed us like you fed the 5000 and you will be our **king**; Raise our dead as you raised Lazarus, and you will be our **king**; heal our sick as you healed the paralysed man, and you will be our **king**. When it became evident that Jesus had not come to do these things so the cries of **blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord** changed to **Crucify, crucify.**

The people lost **confidence**; they did not give themselves to Christ.

Do we have **confidence** in Christ? Do we have the confidence to persevere when it seems easier to turn away? Do we have the **confidence** to come to him in the first place when everything within us says we should, but fear tells us we'll be rejected. Do we have the **confidence** to trust in Christ as our **King** and High Priest? Do we have the confidence that as the writer to the Hebrews would have us believe that he is indeed the perfect sacrifice for each and every one of us, regardless of background, circumstance, position or anything else?

There is a way to demonstrate our **confidence** and to know the benefits of his lordship. The writer to the Hebrews said this: **Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who would obey him.** (Hebrews 5:8-9)

The writer to the Hebrews is not espousing a gospel of works, do something and be saved, no, the very opposite. He speaks about a gospel of grace. Trust, have **confidence** in the work of Christ, show this **confidence** through obedience and receive eternal salvation. We show this obedience in the way we stop trying to earn our own salvation, we stop bargaining with God and simply accept that

Christ alone is the way, the truth and the life and so we rest in that finished work of the Jesus, the gospel, the cross.

Psalm Sunday is about confidence. Confidence in Jesus as our **King** and our Saviour, our great high priest, our eternal and perfect sacrifice. Confidence that Easter is for us, not just in terms of a rest from our work, but a rest for our souls.