**Week 6 - Courage to follow God’s call**

**Bible Text: Matthew 20:17–19**

***Testimony subject – How has God has equipped you to follow his calling?***

**Introduction**

* Have you ever thought to yourself how vital it is that we do not know what the future holds?

*Note: This doesn’t reject prophecy, which God has used throughout many generations to prepare people for what is to come.*

* In our everyday lives, we do not know what will happen, and so we trust God to lead us and help us with the decisions we have to make.
* But Jesus *did* know what was going to happen, as we see from the verses in Matthew 20:7-19. See also Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22; Luke 12:50; John 3:14.

**The background to the Palm Sunday journey**

* Jesus knew that his arrival in Jerusalem and the manner of his entry would begin the process of his death.
* Roman leaders usually arrived on horseback to mark significance, success and power. Jesus, however, arrives on a donkey to show a very different authority. His entry is a message of peace. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred (Matthew 21:10). The triumphal entry had been prophesied in Zechariah 9:9.
* The city was filled with visitors for the Passover celebrations, and some visitors asked to know who this man was. The religious leaders were horrified at the support and adulation Jesus was receiving from the crowds.
* Jesus had arranged the details of the donkey and planned this special journey. He was well aware of what he was doing and the consequences of it.

**Jesus the Son of God was also a man**

* Hebrews 4:15 says: ‘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 way, just as we are – yet he did not sin.’
* In case we think this must have been easier for Jesus than for anyone else, his humanity means this was just as hard for him as any of us.
* So throughout all that we will read about Holy Week we have to remind ourselves that in all of this Jesus was obedient, whatever the cost would be. We see a determination within him.

**Courage to follow God’s call**

* Jesus taught the disciples that following him would be costly (Luke 14:25-34).
* Here is the crux of all that we have been looking at in this Lenten series. We are called to be disciples of Jesus. That is not membership of the Church but much more. It is to represent God where he has placed us, to live obediently to his standards, and to willingly accepting the role he has for us.
* Understanding that God has a plan for each of us, we have to daily make ourselves available, to trust him, to obey him, to follow him. Disciples are those who follow the teacher, Jesus Christ.
* *Note - Illustrate with stories/testimonies of people who have willingly accepted the challenge of discipleship in our generation.*
* In our present culture this will require courage and faith. It will be costly and will at times require sacrifice.

**Application and response**

* God waits for us to say that we are willing to be his disciple. He needs people in all walks of life, in all sorts of settings, to live a life worthy of him.
* Palm Sunday is a celebration of courage, grounded in trust and propelled by love.
* We must find the courage to draw on God’s power when we know what’s coming and we understand what we are called to face – even when we may not want to.
* As we enter Holy Week, how do you need to draw on God’s power and strength to give you courage to follow God’s call?