

## Spartacus by Aram Khachaturian (Theme to Onedin – a voyage)

If we ask people to describe life, most will depict it in the same way- as a path or a road, a journey, a voyage from one experience to the next – from one tribulation to triumph and back again. It's a journey from birth to death and beyond.

What road did you use to get here today? All of us travel different roads or paths every day of our lives. We take different roads to work. We take different career routes, different educational paths.

It can become dangerous to drive on a road that we drive on every single day. It's dangerous because we stop being alert, we take things for granted, we figure we can drive this route with our eyes closed. If something different happens on the road we may not notice it at all... At least, until it's too late.

An Anglican minister was preaching in an unfamiliar church one Sunday morning. As he stood in the pulpit to begin the service, he tapped the microphone to make sure that it was on. He heard nothing, even though, it was working fine. So he leaned closer to the microphone and said, he thought, to himself; "There is something wrong with this thing." The congregation, being well trained church people immediately responded, "And also with you."

This story illustrates the danger of the familiar. We can be so steeped in routine that we stop paying attention to what we are doing.

The accounts of the Triumphal Entry, the cross, and Easter are so familiar to most of us that we can easily go through the motions of a celebration without ever allowing the message of these events to touch us.

A woman was driving home one night. The weather was really nasty. Rain was coming down in buckets and visibility was very poor. Seeing taillights ahead of her, she followed the car in front. Not being able to see, the car in front seemed to be going in the right direction. So she stuck with it.

All of a sudden the car in front of her came to a stop. She began to wonder what had happened; perhaps the car in front had hit a deer or some thing like that. She began to feel uncomfortable; thinking being stopped in the middle of the road can often lead to accidents.

Much to her alarm the car in front of her turned off their lights. Her concern was now growing as well as her anger, and she was then startled by a knocking on her window. She looked up and there was a man standing in the pouring rain wanting to speak to her. She cracked the window open and asked the man what the problem was. The man replied by stating that that was the question he was going to ask her. She retorted that she wasn't the one who had stopped in the middle of the road and then turned off the car lights. The man's reply was that they were not in the middle of the road, but in his driveway!

Obviously, this woman had chosen the wrong leader to follow. She had chosen a leader who would not take her to where she wanted and needed to go. She had chosen the wrong leader and the wrong road.

What road are you on?

There have been all kinds of traffic studies contradicting one another in regard to causes and reasons for traffic accidents. Many reasons have been cited such as speeding, driver inattention, mobile phones, poor weather conditions, improper design and make-up!

Remarkably, one statistic has held true for every study ever performed. You are about 12 times less likely to be involved in a traffic accident when you are driving on a one way street.

The same is true if you are living for Jesus. Being a Christian does not exempt us from troubles, but living life according to His plan and on His Highway will lessen our chances of ending up in a mess. But only when we are on God's "One Way" Street.

To "walk with Christ?" implies a continuous, ongoing process. This means we are going to walk in the same direction that Jesus is walking. We need to continue to walk (not sit or stand) in the paths that Jesus would walk and live the kind of life that Jesus would live.

If our Christian life resembles a Sunday drive, or a roller-coaster ride, we can establish stability in our daily walk with Jesus if we walk with Him on His highway.

Jesus Wants us to Travel His Road, to follow Him on the Road to Jerusalem.

### 1) A Familiar Road

It was a familiar road the disciples found themselves on that first Palm Sunday. It was the road to Jerusalem and they had walked it many times before. They knew, as they reached the town of Bethany, they would soon turn round the Mount of Olives, and see the city of Jerusalem suddenly sprawl out before them. They had travelled this way with Jesus before. They would again come to the city, which, at this time, would be swelling with millions ready to celebrate the Passover.

Jesus knew the road as well. He'd travelled it before, from very young to now. Mary and Joseph would probably have brought him to Jerusalem for the feast every year. It was a magnificent road, a wonderful road to the pilgrims who travelled it. It was especially breathtaking, when, after not seeing the city for the whole journey, you came around that mountain, and there it was! You would see the temple glistening in the afternoon sunlight, and you'd see the magnificent, towering gates; you'd remember the great history of it all: how King David first took that parcel of land as God's city, and how Solomon first built a glorious temple there. Then you'd recall years of sorrow, when it lay in ruin during seventy years of captivity, until Nehemiah rebuilt its walls.

The road itself was known and loved. But the journey of that Palm Sunday was completely different.

The road would not change, but the things along the way, and the end result, would be different than any other trip ever made to Jerusalem.

Today, a donkey's colt would be found tied up outside, and used as a mount for Jesus to enter Jerusalem.

Today, throngs of people would go ahead and behind Jesus saying, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

The road was familiar. The road did not change; but the journey was unique. The disciples knew the road; Jesus knew the journey.

As He rode, Jesus knew where the journey would end: today, crowds laying palm branches before him shouting Hosanna! which means, "Lord, save us!" declaring him to be the promised Messiah, or deliverer.

By the end of the week, crowds would be yelling, "crucify." Today, we see crowds. Jesus knew the journey. Still, he went forward.

Normally, every Jew would walk into Jerusalem as a sign of respect for the holy city. But not Jesus. He rode in.

Zechariah 9:9 was a prophecy known to every Jew who was longing for freedom from the rule of the Romans and the arrival of the Messiah.

Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

By His riding a donkey into Jerusalem, Jesus was saying, "Yes I am the Messiah."

A conquering king would arrive on a horse - today an armoured car.

The donkey was the mount of a man of peace, a merchant or a priest.

A king offering peace arrived on a regal animal the donkey - today an open topped limousine.

Jesus came to offer mercy and grace, not justice or judgement.

The Jewish law of war required that a city be offered peace before war was declared (Deut-20:10-12). Still operated by Israeli military. Jesus came offering peace, but it was to be refused

There was rejoicing; the saviour of Israel had come, in fulfilment of the prophecy. But they forgot to add 2 and 2 together. He was on a donkey, not a horse! It was a false expectation that Jesus was going to overthrow Rome.

But one day he will arrive as **The Rider on the White Horse** as Revelation 19 tells us!

Rev 19 11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron sceptre." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

## 2) A Unique Journey

As we walk the pathway of Palm Sunday we realise that all of us walk down a road in this life. Each path may be a bit different, and although we know the roads of our lives, Jesus knows the journey- we don't.

There are too many people in this world who think that their life is all about themselves. "It's my life," the teenager screams at her parents, "I don't care what you say. I'm going to do what I want!"

A patient diagnosed with cancer cries, "Why is this happening to ME?" We often forget that our lives are not just about ourselves. Our lives have something to do with our friends, our family, our wives, our husbands, our children, our parents, our neighbours, our coworkers, our acquaintances, and yes, even our enemies. No ones life is all about me, or you, or him, or her.

We talk about life as a journey, a voyage or a road. There are roads we well know. We walk them day after day, year after year.

There's the road of a student: you know where he will go on Monday. He will get on the bus, get a lift, walk or cycle to school. He will be there for several hours, go to his lessons, maybe an after school club, and then its back home.

There's the road of daily life: you get up, get ready for work, get there and work for eight hours, and head back home.

Another may find each day is just an endless round of shopping, cleaning and cooking.

Most of those roads we've travelled again and again, and will continue to travel. Jesus has gone with you every step of the way.

Tomorrow and the next day it'll probably be the same road, but who knows about the journey? What strange thing will appear along that road? When will a detour take place? We know the roads; Jesus knows the journey, and knew it ahead of time, before we ever walked the road. .

Our lives, the roads we walk, should lead us to either follow behind Christ, singing his praises, or to go before him, laying palm branches and cloaks.

Jesus may take us down a familiar road, and then do something different. Who knows what will happen tomorrow? You think it's just another ordinary day, just another family get together, and through a simple conversation we get to talk about church, faith, and forgiveness.

The road is the same: but the journey may be different. Jesus knows it, and will provide the answers.

Christ knows where and when to send us to fetch the humble never-before used gentle answer, which he will ride into another heart.

I believe the promise he gave his disciples is equally appropriate for us

John 14:26 **the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**

and

Matt 10:19-20 **But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.**

At the heart of Palm Sunday is a path. It's the path our humble Saviour rode on in majesty, and lowly pomp, as he went on to suffer and die for our sins. It's about the path Christ humbly rides into our hearts today through His Word.

Let's remember that our roads, our journeys, really aren't just about us. They are about Christ Jesus, and his salvation. Our lives are about his Kingdom- his rule in our hearts and in the hearts of others through faith.

Which road are you travelling? If you are on the road with Christ, stay there on the road of humility, obedience and submission. Follow Him for the glory of God. Remember, it's not about you, it all about Jesus.

Once we were not on the right road following the Savior, we came to a crossroad of decision. Jesus offered hope, encouragement, and eternal life. He's not there to take way the fallout of the difficulties of life, or the consequences of our bad decisions. He's there with forgiveness to take away our sin and its guilt.

May we walk His road. It's not an easy road - it's a highway of holiness. There are no exemptions from the twists and turns of life. But there is the promise of a heavenly Companion, a Saviour who loves and cares about you.

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Note: I use many sources in preparation. If unacknowledged material has been used, I apologise. Please let me know (via contact tab) and I will add the acknowledgment when updating this material.