**Sermon summary confession service - Reformed church Elim ’t Harde - March 24, 2024**

Imagine walking along in the procession behind Jesus, towards Jerusalem. What will Jesus do in Jerusalem? How will the people respond to Him? Every hill they climb brings the procession closer to Jerusalem. Tension is rising, something special is going to happen, but what? Some say: 'Jesus is the Messiah and He is going to expel the Romans from city and country.' Deep longing emerges among the people. They long for an end to Roman domination. Longing for independence, for peace and freedom, for a happy future.

Put your situation next to it. What are you longing for? The situation you are in is also one with worries. You have many challenges and setbacks in your life? It is hard for you at times. There is sadness, uncertainty. How do I stay/how do I become happy, achieve a hopeful future? With those worries and questions, may I ask you to walk in the procession and pay attention to Jesus?

At the village of Bethphage, Jesus sends two disciples ahead. There stands a donkey with her foal. Jesus oversees the circumstances and has foresight. Teaching point: In the midst of people who know confusion and uncertainty, in the midst of people who do not know how to face the future, we see Jesus who clearly knows what to do and what He is doing. If you wonder who can help you and who you should follow, you see Jesus today: He oversees times and occasions, and has an eye and heart for people.

Today, six young people say: 'We have discovered who Jesus is. We confess that He is the Messiah. Where in my life I face mistakes, shortcomings, difficulty, worry and stress, call it sin and its consequences, I have discovered that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. He can be trusted, and believing in Him means that I trust that He will lead me/us the way through this life, and bring us to God, where we will always be happy.' No, not that this immediately solves all questions of these young people, and removes all worries from their lives. But where they can hold on to is that Jesus knows what He is doing.

Clothes are placed on the donkey, and Jesus sits on top of it. He rides into Jerusalem on the donkey: sign of meekness and humility. The people start singing Psalm 118: 'Hosanna, Son of David, blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.' And they wave palm branches. Hosanna means: Lord, grant salvation. It is also praise. What do you do? Do you also pick up a palm branch and praise Jesus, as the Blessed One who comes to us in the Name of the Lord? The invitation to people who are seeking rest and something to hold on to, is: acknowledge Jesus as the one who comes to us in the name of the Lord, and you will be blessed by it. Like Jesus, go the way of humility and meekness. God's kingdom does not come to earth through violence. We don’t receive God's blessing if we are callous, cruel and mean. However, we will if we go our way humbly and meekly, like Jesus. The bond with Jesus helps us to remain standing in this life with its confusion and uncertainty.

The earth trembles when Jesus rides into Jerusalem on the donkey. Jesus will shake the ground in Jerusalem two more times: When He dies on the cross, Good Friday, the earth will tremble again. That is when He completes suffering and dies. And when He is raised, Easter, the earth will shake again. At the cross and at the empty tomb, you will discover that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. He is the one who also wants to give you something to hold on to in this life. He is the Messiah who can also give you peace and help you out of misery and darkness, and bring light into your life. If there is one who can fulfil our high hopes and deep desires, it is Jesus.

**Questions for discussion**

1) What worries do you know in your life, and what does that do to you? Where/how do you look for solutions?

2) If you don't oversee circumstances and times, but Jesus does, what does that mean for you?

3) What is meekness, and why is it so incredibly important?

4) What image do you have of Jesus? Could He be the Messiah? What do the cross of Good Friday and the empty tomb of Easter say about Jesus' identity?