



**A sermon for Choral Evensong at Wells Cathedral,
preached on Sunday 29 March by the Reverend Dr
Kate Bruce, RAF Chaplain**

Palm Sunday

Isaiah 5: 1-7 and Matthew 21: 33-end

The theme of this week's Holy week sermons is: 'Moving Deeper into Love.'
'Moving Deeper into Love.' Keep that thought in mind.

The horizon of our times and the horizon of scripture seem to fuse together to present a question that will carry us into this Holy Week – and into the theme of 'Moving Deeper into Love.'

Who do you trust?

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Isaiah's prophecy speaks against a backdrop that seems familiar: geopolitical volatility, The neo-Assyrian empire is looming, a bulldozer pulverising smaller kingdoms. Isaiah addressed leaders who were less than ideal. Under King Uzziah, a ruler in Isaiah's time, wealth was concentrated in the hands of the few. Ahaz, another king who ruled while Isaiah prophesied, was a self-serving, idolatrous and arrogant leader.

Contrast these two with Jesus, King of kings, entering his city on a donkey.

Against a backdrop of spiritual struggle, Isaiah's underlying question concerned trust. Would the people follow leaders like King Hezekiah – the great reformer, and trust in God? Or would they turn their backs and spurn the Holy One of Israel.

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Who do you trust?

Isaiah writes as a minstrel singing a love song. He describes how his beloved (God) created a vineyard, tending it with care, love, and the expectation of a

fruitful harvest. But the grapes are rotten. No wine to gladden the heart – not even a bottle of Sarson’s best vinegar. God’s hopes for his people come to worse than nothing: – ‘*he expected justice but saw bloodshed; righteousness but heard a cry!*’ Notice – God sees and hears the results of injustice and oppression. There can be no hiding, no convenient redaction.

Stand in the Temple with Jesus as he tells the Parable of the Wicked Tenants. Notice the chief priests and elders – his target audience. Ironically, they will act in the same way as the wicked tenants in the parable who threw the son of the landowner out and killed him. But they can’t see the connection.

The chief priests put their trusting their own power and influence, like the idolatrous kings of Isaiah’s day, they know Jesus is talking of them – but rather than listen, their ears are blocked and their hearts are stony. Their desire to get rid of Jesus hardens.

They cannot hear his reference to Psalm 118 ‘*The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*’ If they had noted this reference and followed it, they would have seen how these words sit in a psalm which celebrates the goodness and love of God – who is to be trusted above all else.

Psalm 118 – worth pondering in responding to that question: *Who do you trust?* That fundamental question... Psalm 118 – Holy Week homework – as we respond to the invitation to move deeper into love.

Will you trust the landowner, the vine tending God – or will you bend to your own will and power? Will we trust the one who gifts us life, opportunity, possibility, and calls us to bear fruit that will bring fulfilment and gladden the hearts of others. Or will we take refuge in our own resources – forgetting that it is God who is the source of life and breath.

We flee God for all kinds of reasons. But one reason underlies all others. the rebellious will to power -It underlies the failure of Judah and Israel – God’s cherished garden in Isaiah 5 –which comes up with weeds.

The rebellious will to power underlies the corrupt tenants’ greedy, murderous behaviour.

The rebellious will to power underlies the opposition to Jesus which will lead to

his murder.

The rebellious will to power underlies the violence and oppression – the corruption and cruelty of our age.

The rebellious will to power.

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Who do you trust?

God – our Creator gives us life. His love endures forever (a refrain from Psalm 118).

He offers us a refuge from the storms. His love endures forever.

He is our strength and salvation. His love endures forever.

This Palm Sunday let us go with the crowds and sing: *'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'* In him we put our trust. He is our helper and healer. We are invited, called, urged, to put our trust in him, whose love endures forever. And so we move deeper into love.

As the nations rage, and division splits societies, let's choose to be God's fruitful people, speaking with humility and gentleness, peace and wholeness, reconciliation and hope into the wounds of our volatile context. Moving deeper into love.

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Ultimately - who do you trust? Trust Jesus.

The Reverend Dr Kate Bruce

29 March 2026

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