

SERMON AT GELORUP 25/3/2018: GEOFF CHADWICK

M K 1:1-11: PALM SUNDAY: "YESTERDAY'S HERO"

In 1974 as a 13 year old I was invited to play my clarinet in front of my whole high school at an assembly. Imagine: a timid skinny lad in front of a gym full of hormonally charged adolescents.

The musical act to follow me was a group of rather imposing (too me) Year 12 boys performing an up-beat and emotionally charged impersonation of The Bay City Rollers.

Costumed in their best tartan, singing with their best fake Scottish accents, and sporting the latest "chick-magnets" called mullets- they were mobbed by a screaming gang of hysterical teenaged girls. Before the school staff could take back control, and rescue the broken microphone, the girls carted the boys off stage, ripped off sections off their tartaned outfits and screamed the highest notes their strained female voices could muster.

It was far from a dignified affair, and I, the timid skinny 13-year-old standing in the sidelines clutching my clarinet as a defence weapon, wondered what it was that made those girls go crazy! I wondered and then thought "Why didn't they go crazy for me?"

Ah- the things we learn in adolescence!

Now here's an irony for you! One of the Bay City Rollers' big hits was a song called "Yesterday's Hero." Here are some of the words:

When / walk down the street,
See the people who stop and stare and say
Haven't I seen that face somewhere a long time ago
When / walk down the street,
See the stranger who says, "why, hi, "
With a, "how you going, buddy, "
When you walked on by I thought I'd say hello
They say:
Haven't I seen your face before
Weren't you the boy that used to live next door...
Take a look at me, I'm yesterday's hero,
Yesterday's hero, that's all I'll be.
Take a look at me, I'm yesterday's hero,
And yesterday's hero, is all that I'm gonna be.

Now, some 50 years later, these Bay City Rollers have become subjects of their own song.

"Bay City Who?" you may ask. "Are they heroes of yesterday?" After all, no self-respecting 16-17 year old girl of the present would be seen in hysterics over a bunch of Scottish, tartan clad mullet-heads.

I can hear the Y12 girls of today: "What on earth were you teeny boppers of the past thinking!"

(Bye the way, are there any closest Bay City Rollers fans here?)

Poor Bay City Rollers, maybe they are yesterday's hero's singing a song about yesterday's hero.

Now when we think of that colt ride that Jesus took into Jerusalem all those years ago, was he not soon to become "Yesterday's Hero?". He was well aware of the fickleness of human loyalties. There were plenty of "yesterday heroes" from recent times; most of them to do with attempted revolts against the Romans - and most of them had come to nothing. Did Jesus risk being just another "Yesterday's Hero"?

I think this would have been on his mind, but he went ahead with the ride anyway.

Here was a procession. But one that was probably feebler than we imagine. It was a procession of a n un-broken colt, frond bearing, "Hosanna" calling "troops" on a primitive track of cloaksand branches. It's hardly promising - especially when you compare it to a Roman procession with thoroughbreds, hardened "Hail Caesar" shouting warriors, and cobble-stoned roads.

Nevertheless, Jesus took what homage he could, gathered the heroic hopes of the oppressed and encouraged the cries of "hosanna". Jesus, i t seems, is happy to be the hero of the moment.

It seems that in every generation and in every heart of faith, there is always the chance that

Jesus could become "Yesterday's Hero." How often have you heard people say that religion or belief in Jesus is "old-fashioned" or "irrelevant in the modern world."

And how often have you been tempted to leave your faith behind- putting Jesus behind you a a sort of "fad" or "phase" of your life. I wonder if your "Hosanna" has ever wanted to give in to the temptation of "Hail Caesar"? And I wonder if down the ages every generation has suffered that temptation.

Nevertheless, Jesus took the chance, and did the heroic thing for us. He faced all fears. Not just his own - but ours as well. This is what heroes do. They face our fears on our behalf.

When fear makes us impotent - the hero brings potency. The hero makes the impossible possible.

Palm Sunday gives us the courage to pick up our faith anew and be potent again. It challenges us to get back into the procession, to follow an unbroken colt, to wave a frond, to exclaim Hosanna and to make a path for our Lord.

Palm Sunday reminds us that Jesus is not "Yesterday's Hero" but is our hero for all time!

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Yesterday's Hero: Bay City Rollers

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When you walked on b y I thought I'd say hello
They say:
Haven't / seen your face before
Weren't you the boy that used to live next door,
Weren't you on television ev'ry night
Haven't I seen you round
Take a look a t me, I'm yesterday's hero,
Yesterday's hero, that's all I be.
Take a look at me, I'm yesterday's hero,
And yesterday's hero, is all that I'm gonna be
I f I don't get together,
Make a new start and be somebody better,
All that I'll be if I don't get together now.
When you walk down the street, now,
I f you know me, then pass me by,
If...*