

Could you hear us? Hosannas shouted and holy cheering all the way into town? I wish you could have been there to see it. At first a few people got word that the famous hillside teacher was coming and went to greet him, some out of curiosity, but as more and more came, it turned into a hallelujah parade.

When I myself heard Jesus in town, I too got caught up in the moment – and sure enough. There he was. Right in front of us. No armed guards or trumpet blaring. It wasn't like when an emperor or senator goes by, all frills and flourishes, flanked by soldiers and footmen in gold armor.

Just a simple man in simple clothes riding an ordinary farm donkey, children skipping up ahead and dancing at his side, the crowd waving palm branches and singing hosannas.

I had never seen Jesus, but my brother-in-law was there the day he took a picnic basket of fish sandwiches and fed thousands of villagers beside the Sea of Galilee.

The rabbis at our temple were always hunched together whispering over this Jesus' scandalous sermons, but I liked what I heard when I eavesdropped.

Help the poor. Feed the hungry. Give people the benefit of the doubt.

What's wrong with healing the sick on the Sabbath? I say nothing, particularly if you're the one with the broken leg or hurting chest.

A woman in my sewing group knew Bartholomew – he's one of Jesus' disciples - and she told us about Jesus healing blind people and befriending tax collectors and making Samaritans the hero of the story.

The Pharisees had a hissy fit over that.

Jesus talked about life after death, an idea I really like especially since my grandmother is in her last days. But the Sadducees insist this is hogwash, there was no such thing. We just lie in the ground with our ancestors. What a horrible thought.

Maybe that's why they are so "sad, you see?" My youngest daughter came up with that at the dinner table. She has a point!

At first I was just curious. Our idea of a Messiah was someone who'd lead a fierce army and bash the Romans and slay anyone who isn't like us. That's how it was in the past. Revenge and Violence. God smiting and driving asunder. If you were King, it was your job to kill your enemies and force people to bow down to you.

But this King of the Jews – that's what the crowd was calling him - was a different kind of king, and soon I was raising my own voice as a believer.

I'm tired of so many strict laws. I'm tired of the division among neighbor and animosity among nations, the measure of worth between men and women, the circumcised and uncircumcised.

How much better – but harder, I imagine - to respect each other, bless those who curse you. Forgive those who offend you or do you harm. Accept those who are different. To love God, of course, but to love each other as part of that,

And then there was this: Those children.

Children know goodness, aren't afraid to show it. They came in droves to sit on his lap. They were so happy this morning, they nearly jumped out of their skin. They could tell what was behind those kind eyes and gentle presence.

Sometimes seeing is believing, but sometime truth comes when you believe what you see.

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