

Palm Sunday: Jesus the King

John 12:12-26 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 10 April 2022

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What subject or course was the easiest for you in school? What was the toughest?

Worship: [Psalm 91](#) (Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?)

Sermon Summary for [John 12:12-26](#) (Read aloud before reading the sermon summary.)

Dorothy Sayers once noted, *“If Holy Week doesn't shock you, startle you, jolt you, then something is wrong.”* We are meant to get caught up in it all: from the triumphal entry to the cross to the empty tomb. And it all starts with the jubilant crowds joyfully honoring Jesus as He rides into Jerusalem. It's a city filled to bursting – likely ten times its normal capacity. And somehow these people praising Jesus at his entry would soon call for His death. Clearly, Palm Sunday is a day filled with misunderstandings. It is a crossroads for Jesus and for us all... and yet we can totally miss what this day is all about. John admits as much for Himself and the other disciples ([12:16](#)). What then can this story tell us about the kind of king Jesus is and how He reigns?

Jesus reigns as the King of Grace // Many who came to see Christ as He entered the city wanted to see the One who had raised Lazarus – to witness another miracle. They brought palm branches to lay before Him, images of royalty, victory, and celebration. No one understood what His actions really meant, yet Jesus received it all with grace, accepting their praises. This should encourage us. Christ knows we misunderstand Him, but he still accepts us. He knows it's a starting point, that we are works-in-progress. And we need to extend that grace both to ourselves and to others. Because we will never fully understand Him this side of Heaven. And He loves our praises still.

Jesus reigns as the King of Peace // The crowds have no real idea what they're doing. But Jesus knows exactly what is going on. He is Lord over all our confusion, desire, longing, and desperation. And in the middle of it, He is fulfilling prophecy: a King of peace, riding humbly, committed to transforming His people with His true peace. In truth, we are a lot like the donkey in this story. Our Savior has claimed us and uses us for His mission of peace. It all can (and will) be quite confusing; His timing is not ours. But what He is doing – if we are willing to trust and follow Him – is weaving our story into His own Great Story of bringing shalom to the world.

Jesus reigns as the King of Glory // The glory of Jesus is in His cross. Therefore, the glory for His followers is in the cross as well. When the Greeks wanted to see Him and He responded by talking about His imminent death, He wasn't being rude. He was communicating how we will best be able to see Him as King: lifted upon the cross. There, we see how truly incapable we are of saving ourselves; but we also see how fully committed God is to rescuing and redeeming His beloved children. Palm Sunday is all about the strange mercy of a strange kingship with a strange glory. Here is our great challenge: to discover Jesus amid the alluring gods of our culture and moment in time, just as the people of Jerusalem needed to.

The true Gospel is one of costly grace, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote. This is true for Jesus, and it's true for us. Because only costly grace can change us. Palm Sunday begins with Jesus kindly accepting the praises that were offered Him. This is a starting place, but never an ending place. As Tim Keller said, *“True grace comes to us by costly sacrifice. And if God was willing to go to the cross and endure such pain and absorb such a cost in order to save us, then we must learn to live sacrificially as we serve others.”* We are no longer spectators; we must walk our Lord's path. This is how we enter into Holy Week and into the life our Father yearns for us to be a part of.

Discussion Questions *(You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)*

Jesus reigns as the King of Grace

- What did the Israelites expect of a king? What did they believe they had been promised?
- What did Jesus's kingship actually look like? How would you describe the ways Jesus is King?
 - Why is this difficult for both the Israelites and for us to comprehend?
- What is the significance of Jesus accepting the praise of the crowds despite their not understanding what they were witnessing?
 - How does this apply to our own lives? And how is this a call to how we should treat others?

Jesus reigns as the King of Peace

- What does the donkey symbolize?
 - How does this echo how we become a part of God's great story as followers of Jesus?
- God's strength and how God works will not always look like what we imagine, but it will always bring glory to Him. How have you seen this play out in your own life and faith?
 - In what ways is the idea of the "King of Peace" difficult to understand or process?

Jesus reigns as the King of Glory

- The seed is the final symbol in the story. What are some of the meanings of the seed that Jesus tells of?
 - Reread [verses 24-26](#). What words of Jesus stand out most?
- Practically speaking, what does it look like for us as Christians to die each day as the seed does?
 - What is the result of "dying a daily death"?

Prayer

Continue to pray for the situation in Ukraine, for peace, Christ's mercies and intervention. Pray for new and non-believers to attend the Christianity Explored Groups and for our Easter Offerings for Hope for LA. For this week's Prayer Guide for personal or group use, click [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Prayer & Gratitude

Break into groups of three to compose a 6-8 sentence prayer in which you express your heart of gratitude to God for what Jesus accomplished on our behalf. You may wish to follow this form:

During this Holy Week, we celebrate before You, for You have worked wonders by
We think of
Our hearts are
We remember
These things make us
We rejoice in