



# Palm Sunday

John 12:12-19  
Week of April 10, 2022

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## Before Connect Group

- John 12:12-19
  - Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>
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The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

John 12:12-19, ESV

# Sermon Notes

*Hosanna! Our God Saves!*

I have this odd love hate with Palm Sunday. We tend to think that Palm Sunday is this cute Sunday where Jesus marches in to Jerusalem. We have done cute adorable things in the past where children come in and lay down palm branches on the altar dress up in mom's bed sheets tied with rope. The Palm Branches were used as a sign for the nation of Israel and removal of foreign powers from the nation of Israel. Syria had invaded the country and as the Syrians were expelled the people took the palm branches and marched around the city in a march of victory that the promised land of God once again belonged to the people of God.

Thus as Jesus entered into the city of Jerusalem riding on the donkey, those who knew who He was knew that He would be the King over Israel. They proclaim with a loud voice Hosanna which means God saves, blessed is He even the King of Israel. We see this moment as a proclamation of Jesus Christ as King! Even the donkey, which although is a laborous animal, during that time had also been a sign of Kingship rather than poverty. People in poverty didn't use donkeys to carry things, they used their backs. They were proclaiming Jesus Christ the King over Rome and the oppressors that stood in the land God had promised.

And here the love/hate I have with Palm Sunday. Jesus did not come to over throw Rome. Although a King He came as a servant. He did not amass an army to stand against Rome nor did He call down angels to fight the government. He arrived in Jerusalem and did, for all the people understood, nothing. Then, less than a week later, this crowd that had been championing Jesus Christ chanting our God saves shouted crucify Him. Palm Sunday represents the Triumphant Entrance of the King into Jerusalem kicking off the beginning of Holy Week as well as the people's massive lack of understanding as to why He came.

The shouts of the people that "Jesus Saves!" had been correct. Yet their scope was absolutely incorrect. Jesus Saves! He saves us from the sickness of sin in this world. Yet the world hates Him for it. The enemy of the world is Jesus who comes to draw His people to Himself and established His Kingdom of Earth. Yet, we cannot stop to think that our enemy is the same people who stand against Jesus. And no matter what The King will reign for all eternity forever and ever.

## **The King Will Reign Over All The World**

- *John 12:13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"*
- Palm Sunday is an issue of scope. The people thought that He was coming to save them from Rome but deep beneath the surface of geopolitical occupation a much bigger problem had been brewing for generations.
- The people both simultaneously exalted Jesus Christ as the Savior who reigns and also attempted to limit His power and influence.
  - They were willing to proclaim Him as King over Rome and as King over Israel, but nothing beyond that.
  - Their vision was a man sized mission expecting a man sized result. Yet, God's mission is God sized and will produced the promised God sized result.
- Jesus did not come to just be King over Israel or be limited to a particular geographical sphere. He came to save all people and draw all things to Himself.
- When we talk about the Kingship of Jesus Christ, we do not relegate Him to one particular area because we have no authority to do so. When we talk about the sovereignty of God,

we cannot put limits on it or attempt to keep God in any contained space. He is bigger than any of our boundaries and stronger than any ruler who stands against Him.

- *Deuteronomy 10:17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.*
  - This passage describes the impetus or the reason for marking ourselves as followers of God. It appeals to the nature of God as above and over all things.
  - He cannot be influenced to act against His own will and desire
- As Jesus rode into, the people exclaimed Hosanna! Our God Saves! And we know He is the King of Kings

## **The Enemy of the World is Jesus**

- *John 12:19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."*
  - This statement is made as a result of the news of Lazarus raising from the dead through the miraculous work of Jesus Christ.
  - Lazarus had been in the tomb for multiple days. Jewish culture would have said He is dead, dead and the soul had left the body. And yet, Jesus called Him out of the tomb with the casual strength that they were going to lunch later.
- How much do you have to hate someone that when you see people go from dead to life that you begin to complain? The Pharisees had been so filled with hate that they would rather destroy the evidence of someone returning from the literal dead than to acknowledge that this person might be the Savior.
- Similarly, we all have a tendency to do the same thing! Our natural default state is to return to our flesh. The testing of our faith reveals where we have put our faith because we will always turn to that thing first.
  - COVID revealed a fair amount of us. When the difficulties arose, we saw many people retreat into addiction, drugs, and self-destructive behavior. Yet, we also saw people to cry out to God and ran to be in His presence even if it was through a stupid streaming TV that we all know is no substitute for the real thing. It is a necessary, temporary measure for sure, but it can never replace the connection with the body of Christ.
  - As an aside, if you are watching the stream, and I know a few of you are, I'm not trying to downplay the reason you have for doing this. In fact, especially those who are watching because of medical reasons, or whatever, please reach out to us and let us know how you are and how we can be praying with you.
- *Isaiah 55:6-9 "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*
- We know the power of Jesus Christ to save. We know that God's ways are better than our own. And yet, the moment when things get real and get personal, that fleshly worldly part of us tends to balk and recoil in fear.
  - We are okay following Jesus Christ until he tells us how we should spend our money.
  - We are okay following Jesus Christ until he gives a sexual ethic.
  - We are okay following Jesus Christ until he tells us to forgive our enemies, extend grace to those around us, and love the unloveable.
- The enemy of this world and the cultural values it holds is Jesus Christ. But we know that

Jesus saves.

- When we say Jesus is Lord and Jesus Saves! We submit to Him in every aspect of our life, knowing that it is He who is greater than we. Christ is wiser than our ability and, even if we don't understand, following Him means trusting that He knows the way.
- As Jesus rode in, the people exclaimed Hosanna! Our God Saves! And we know that He saves even those who once stood against Him.

## **The Enemy of Those in Jesus Is Not The World**

- People do not misunderstand me. We are absolutely in a spiritual battle. Yet we cannot think that the battle we face is with people. People are not our enemy. People are not our enemy no matter how much we may want them to be.
- Jesus did not ride in to Jerusalem with the entrance of a King, unaware of what the next few days would look like for Him. He knew full well that coming to Jerusalem would mean that He would be brutally crucified and died even though He was innocent.
- *Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*
- The battle we face is one of a spiritual battle and our enemy is clear. It is Satan and the spiritual forces of darkness. It is the King of deception who stands against a sovereign King. He masquerades around as a King but He is unable to instead. Instead, He lures people away from the truth and source of life, leaving a wake of destruction in his path. He destroys souls and one day will be cast into the lake of fire to experience the fullness of God's presence poured out in wrath upon himself as the king of rebellion.
  - For those of us who got an image of someone we know in our head who meets that criteria, which is a lot of you if you are anything like me and most of the other honest people in this place, then we know that our hearts have missed the message of the Gospel here, entangled in anger and hatred.
  - We have the tendency to try and make someone other than the enemy, our enemy. We want to get our revenge against those who hurt us, despite how much we may have hurt someone else. So we vilify the other person as evil incarnate because they are easier to justify the hatred that is keeping us in self inflicted chains.
  - Please do not pretend like you don't do this. While typing these notes, I had to delete all the things that I had written that I secretly wanted to aim at someone specific. So if you are convicted by anything in this, that's the Holy Spirit, and so am I.
- *Matthew 5:43-45 You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."*
- Too often we attempt to pray for rain on our enemies while thinking we deserve sunshine and rainbows.
- If you are truly meaning to be like Jesus, that may mean that someone gets to be ugly to you and you just smile and take it knowing that the ugliness inside of a person is the result of a broken heart in need of a Savior.
- *John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*
- So love your enemy. Pray for them. Bring them and hand them to the Lord. Angry at someone. Pray for them. And pray where you are. Even if that prayer is Lord bless them, in the face, with a chair, pray that! God will deal with you from there absolutely but at least you are taking a step in the right direction.

- I cannot tell you how many people I have built relationships with because I started praying for them and had to crucify whatever pride I had in myself and realize that they might actually be a good person.
- And the more you pray for a person, the more you will see them as people made in the image of God and you will eagerly desire that they come into relationship with Jesus Christ. You put time into that mess of a person and if you continually pray for them, I promise you will eagerly desire that they will know Jesus.
- As Jesus rode in, the people exclaimed Hosanna! Our God Saves! And we know that He saves even those who once stood against Him.

## **Shout With All Your Voice Hosanna! Jesus Saves**

- *John 12:17* The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness.
- The world needs to hear the message that Jesus Saves! This message is still relevant to all the world that wherever they may be that Jesus Saves! We need a Savior and the people of this world are not our enemy but are in need of the same Savior we are.
- Their sins are not bigger they are just different, if they are even different at all.
- So we shout Hosanna! Our God Saves!
  - Our God saves us from broken marriages and severed relationships knowing that in Christ if the literal dead can come to life then relationships can be restored built on the foundation of the love of God.
  - Our God saves from the pride that wants to make all things about us and the constant need to defend ourselves and instead look to elevate one another higher and higher until all things stand before God.
  - Our God saves from the addictions that in shame we attempt to keep hidden, drawing them into the light and linking arms with one another as we tackle them as a family of believers.
  - Our God Saves not just us from our enemies but our God saves our worst enemies knowing that they too need the same grace we need and that love can conquer any division among people.
  - Finally, and most importantly, our God saves us from the clutches of sin and death that we willingly chose to walk into and pouring the fullness of the wrath we deserved out on Jesus Christ on the cross who walked into Jerusalem willingly, knowing that lay before Him so that we know Him forever.

Holy Week kicks off with the proclamation that Jesus Saves! He is the King over all creation, from beginning to end. He is the God who took on flesh to bring His people to Himself. The King enters into our world knowing that we once stood against Him. Salvation is offered to all and it costs us our death as we submit to Jesus Christ as Lord and know that He comes to save us!

# Connect Group Discussion Questions

- How did the people not understand the scope of Jesus' Kingship? Why is it important to understand the scope of Jesus' Kingship?
- Where have you seen the world responding hostile to Christians and Christianity? What is the response of the Christian to this persecution?
- Why do you think we attempt to make people the enemy instead of understanding the spiritual nature of the battle?
- How should we respond to the persecution by people made in the image of God? Why?
- What can we do to shout Hosanna Our God Saves in our homes? In our church? In our community?

## Challenge For The Week

The shout of Hosanna extends to all people and places and we will all shout in one voice that our God saves. That shout starts with us.

- Where do you need to seek forgiveness from one another for making others the enemy? How have you fallen prey to making others the enemy instead of the enemy?
- Who can you proclaim the saving work of Jesus Christ to? When can you do this? Are you praying for this person?

