

Palm Sunday

When the King Comes Near | Matthew 21:1-17



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Read

In your group, read the passage out loud, with each person reading a verse.

Recall--What's the Sermon Big Idea? When Jesus comes, He doesn't just receive praise—He cleanses what is corrupt and redefines praise.

Head: Grasping the Text

Goal: To grasp the theological concepts and historical context of the text.

1. Consider Jesus' final week on earth and how it occupies a remarkable amount of space in the gospels — roughly one third of all four gospel accounts combined. This is not accidental. The gospel writers are signaling that everything in Jesus' ministry was moving toward this week. Palm Sunday is not just a celebration — it is the opening act of the most important week in human history. Why do you think the cross and resurrection are the climax of his ministry?
2. Read Zechariah 9:9 together. Notice that Zechariah describes the coming King in three ways — just, bringing salvation, and humble. When Matthew retells the story of Palm Sunday, he zeroes in on one quality above the rest: humility. Why do you think that is? And what does the humility of Jesus — the way He chose to arrive, to serve, and ultimately to die — tell us about what His kingdom is really like? (See also Philippians 2:5-8; Luke 14:11; Matthew 5:5; Matthew 20:28; 2 Corinthians 8:9)
3. Jesus quotes two Old Testament passages — Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7. Read both passages in their original context. What is Jesus saying about the gap between what the temple had become and what God always intended it to be?

4. Jesus quotes Psalm 8:2 in response — *"From the mouths of children and infants you have ordained praise."* Read Psalm 8 together. What is the broader context of that psalm, and why is it significant that Jesus applies it here?

Heart: Grasping the Internal Transformation

Goal: To examine how the Gospel reshapes our identity, affections, and motivations.

5. The crowd used the right words — "Hosanna, Son of David" — but had the wrong expectations. Is it possible to praise Jesus sincerely while still misunderstanding who He is and what He came to do? Can you think of one expectation you had about God or Jesus that turned out to be wrong?
6. The message mentioned that a simple-hearted child hasn't yet learned to manage or suppress their wonder about God — they just respond. Honestly, where do you find your own sense of wonder and awe toward God fading most easily — and what does that loss do to the quality and authenticity of your worship?
7. When was the last time you were genuinely surprised by Jesus — caught off guard by something He did or said in Scripture that you hadn't noticed before? What tends to keep you from that kind of fresh encounter?

Hands: Grasping Your Next Step

Goal: To move from hearing the Word to living it out. How can I take a step of action in the next week to walk more faithfully as a disciple?

8. Meekness is strength under control — power surrendered to God's purpose rather than wielded for self-protection, self-benefit, or self-exaltation. Where in your life right now is God calling you to practice meekness? What would it look like practically this week?
9. The temple was meant to be a house of prayer — a place of intimacy, reverence, and encounter with the living God. What is one practical step you can take to create space for that kind of prayer in your own life and form a new daily rhythm?