

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Jesus: The King They Wanted...The King We Needed

Palm Sunday – March 29, 2026

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LEADER INTENT

This conversation is designed to help people:

- Understand who Jesus really is (not just who they expected Him to be)
 - Process disappointment with God in a healthy, honest way
 - Embrace the deeper salvation Jesus offers
 - Take a step toward **living on mission** by inviting others to Easter
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1. SERMON SUMMARY (START HERE)

Palm Sunday looked like a celebration—but it was actually the beginning of a rescue mission.

The crowd welcomed Jesus as a King, expecting Him to overthrow Rome and fix their immediate problems. But Jesus came for something far greater—not political freedom, but **freedom from sin, shame, and death.**

This moment reveals a powerful truth:

Jesus is not always the King we expect—but He is always the King we need.

While the crowd shouted “Hosanna” for temporary rescue, Jesus was walking toward the cross to bring eternal salvation.

And He did it all with **you in mind.**

2. THE SYMBOLS OF PALM SUNDAY

Symbol 1: The Donkey – A King Who Comes in Peace

Scripture: Matthew 21:1–11, Zechariah 9:9

Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey—not a war horse.

This symbol reveals:

- Humility over power
- Peace over conquest
- Salvation over domination

Key Truth:

Jesus didn't come to conquer Rome—He came to conquer sin.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the way Jesus entered Jerusalem mattered?
2. How does Jesus' humility challenge your view of leadership or power?
3. Where in your life do you want Jesus to "fix things quickly" instead of transforming you deeply?

Symbol 2: The Palm Branches – A Misunderstood Victory

Scripture: Matthew 21:8

Palm branches symbolized victory, triumph, and national pride.

The people believed Jesus would bring **political victory**.

But Jesus brought **spiritual victory through sacrifice**.

Key Truth:

The greatest victory didn't happen in the parade—it happened on the cross.

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of "victory" were the people expecting?
2. How do we sometimes define victory differently than God does?
3. Where in your life might God be working in a way that doesn't look like "winning" right now?

Symbol 3: "Hosanna" – A Cry for Rescue

READ: Matthew 21:9 – The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

"Hosanna" means: **"Save us now!"**

The people were crying out for deliverance—but from the wrong thing.

They wanted:

- Freedom from Rome

Jesus came to bring:

- Freedom from sin
- Freedom from shame
- Freedom from death

Key Truth:

The crowd wanted temporary relief—Jesus came to bring eternal rescue.

Discussion Questions

1. When have you cried out to God for help?
 2. Have you ever felt like God didn't show up the way you expected?
 3. What does that reveal about your expectations of God?
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IMPORTANT LEADER MOMENT

This is where the message gets real.

Many people carry an **imagined version of God**:

- Always predictable
- Always fixing problems quickly
- Always giving us what we want

But the real God:

- Allows suffering
- Works differently than we expect
- Cares more about who we're becoming than what we're getting

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been disappointed by God? What happened?
2. What expectations did you have that may not have been accurate?
3. How can we grow in trusting God even when we don't understand Him?

3. THE HEART OF THE MESSAGE

READ Hebrews 12:2 - “For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross.”

That joy was **you**. Jesus endured the cross for you.

He knew:

- The suffering was coming
- The cross was coming
- The pain was coming

And He chose it anyway.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to you that Jesus had *you* in mind?
2. How does that change your view of your worth and identity?
3. What is one area of your life you need to surrender to Him?

4. OUR RESPONSE: FOLLOW, NOT JUST CELEBRATE

Scripture: Philippians 2:5, Matthew 28:19

We are called to have the same mindset as Jesus:

- Humility
- Obedience
- Sacrifice
- Love for people

And then: **Go and make disciples**

Discussion Questions

1. What does it look like to actually follow Jesus—not just believe in Him?
 2. Which part of Jesus’ mindset is hardest for you right now?
 3. What is one step of obedience you can take this week?
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5. CALL TO ACTION: INVITE TO EASTER

Easter is one of the most powerful opportunities to reach people.

Over 80% of unchurched people would attend church if invited by someone they know.

This is not just an announcement—it's a mission.

Discussion + Activation

1. Who is one person God is putting on your heart to invite?
 2. What's been holding you back from inviting them?
 3. Take a moment and:
 - Write their name down
 - Pray for them as a group
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CLOSING CHALLENGE

Will Jesus simply be someone you celebrate...or someone you follow?

Encourage every person to:

- Take one step of obedience
- Invite one person to Easter