

“The Cost of Discipleship” Palm Sunday
Mount of Olives | March 29, 2026 | John 12:12-19
Pastor John Steward

Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus, Palm Sunday is one of those days that hits us between the eyes with the reality of our sin. We proclaim Your power and triumphant presence just like those with the palm branches. And then, too often, we fail to value the costly grace You have granted us, and we stumble into sin. Help us to learn the lesson of Palm Sunday and Holy Week this week. In Your name, we pray, Amen.

Scripture Reading

John 12:12-19

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord— the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, 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 of him and had been done to him. So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!"

Message Notes

Philippians 3:10

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death,

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 1:5

For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:8-10

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

Study Questions – Read John 12:12-19

ICEBREAKER – Getting started:

1. What is the most memorable welcome or celebration you've ever experienced?
2. Describe the most memorable parade you've ever seen or been a part of?
3. What kinds of things do people celebrate most enthusiastically today?
4. Have you ever joined a crowd and later realized you didn't fully understand what was happening?
5. In today's culture, the word "king" has a lot of negative connotations. What does this word mean to you personally?

Based on John 12:12-14, answer the following questions:

OBSERVATION – What does the text say?

1. As you read **John 12:12-19**, what comes to mind? What stands out? What is interesting to you and why?
2. In one sentence, how would you summarize this text?
3. What lesson or message do you think the author is trying to convey?

INTERPRETATION – What does the text mean?

1. According to Gospel of John 12:12–13, what motivated the crowd to go out and meet Jesus?
2. What is the significance of the palm branches the crowd was carrying?
3. What does the crowd mean when they cry out "Hosanna"? What are they expressing?
4. Why do they refer to Jesus as "the King of Israel"? What expectations might they have had?
5. In verse 14–15, why is Jesus riding on a young donkey instead of a horse?
6. How does the reference to prophecy (Zechariah 9:9) deepen the meaning of this moment?
7. Verse 16 says the disciples did not understand at first—why might that be important?
8. What changed later that helped the disciples understand what had happened?
9. How did the raising of Lazarus (mentioned in verses 17–18) influence the crowd's response?
10. What does the reaction of the Pharisees in verse 19 reveal about their perspective?
11. What contrast do you see between the crowd's excitement and the religious leaders' concern?
12. How does this passage begin to set the stage for the events that follow in Jesus' final week?

APPLICATION – How can you apply the text?

1. In what ways might we sometimes misunderstand who Jesus is, like the crowd did?
2. How can we ensure that our worship of Jesus is based on truth and not just emotion or expectation?
3. What does it look like in your life to truly recognize Jesus as King?
4. Are there areas where you are tempted to follow Jesus for what He can do rather than who He is?
5. How can you actively honor and proclaim Jesus this week in your daily life?