

Palm Sunday: Don't Miss It! John 12:12-16

Welcome to another online-only service at Coram Deo. I'm glad you're with us.

And if you're new to our church, we consider you our guest and would love to know.

Just text "Guest" to the number on your screen, and someone will get back to you this week to welcome you and answer any questions you might have.

Praise God, that though separated by city blocks and country miles, we're still together.

Our *building* is empty, but the church is still full. And I trust your heart is as well.

So let's turn to John 12:12-16 and continue to worship. **(Title)**

➤ Palm Sunday is a time to focus on Jesus. And there's nothing better in times like these. Nothing better than to focus our mind's attention, our heart's affection, and our will's submission on him and him alone.

Just like the crowd outside Jerusalem on that *first* Palm Sunday. All eyes were on Jesus.

And I gotta tell ya, I praise God for the *timing* of Palm Sunday in all this.

To redirect our attention, and set our minds on things above instead of things below.

Don't miss that. And don't miss him.

Open up your heart, and let the *Son* shine in. **(Intro)**

➤ V12 – *The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.*

Let's stop there for a minute, because 2 things beg for an explanation.

First is *the large crowd*. *The* large crowd, as opposed to *a* large crowd.

Referring to the same crowd that gathered in Bethany to see Jesus and Lazarus. Who he raised from the dead.

And it's *large*, because this was the during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, just preceding the Passover. One of the 3 *major* feasts in ancient Israel . . .

When *many went up from the country to Jerusalem*. Jn 11:55.

The second phrase that needs explanation, is *the next day* (12). Pinpointing it, as Sunday.

Because the events of *v1* happened on Saturday, *six days before Passover*. Which lands on Friday.

Since Passover lands on Friday, the events of *v1-11* happened on the previous Saturday, 6 days before, and the events of *v12ff*, happened *the next day*. Sunday.

Hence, *Palm Sunday*.

V13. They *heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem* . . .

[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!"* [14] *And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,* [15] *"Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"* [16] *His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified [when he was resurrected and ascended], then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.* Then they understood.

➤ But in the midst of it all, they missed it. V16 – *His disciples did not understand these things at first.*

They *missed* the meaning of Palm Sunday. They *missed* the importance of it.

Was it because they were so close to the trees they couldn't see the forest? So immersed in the situation that they lacked perspective? Maybe.

Or maybe the *crowd* was so overwhelming they couldn't think straight.

Or they were so worried about things below, like *we* are these days, that things above were moot. Out of sight, out of mind.

Whatever the case, for them *and* us, don't miss the meaning and importance of Palm Sunday. Especially what it says about *Jesus*. Starting with this:

Jesus is the Messiah (v13,16)

That's the first characteristic of Jesus that Palm Sunday is intended to convey; and remind us of. And I can't wait to lay it out for you.

Jesus is the anointed one of God. That's what Messiah means. Anointed one.

And it's a concept all *over* the Bible. Starting with the Messianic prophecies and descriptions in the *Old* Testament.

You could even say it's one of the primary *themes* of the Old Testament.

Telling us that the Messiah would be like Adam; having dominion over all the earth (Ps 72:8). And like Moses, who leads and instructs his people. (Dt 18:15,18)

And David, who rules a kingdom. (2 Sam 7)

Only it's all of those things times a million.

Because in Genesis, the Messiah comes from the seed of the woman and crushes *Satan* (Gen 3:15). And in the Psalms, he's King over *all*. (Ps 110)

In Isaiah, he's a suffering servant (Is 53); and a victorious conqueror (Is 56-61); and a righteous branch. Coming from the devastated stump of God's people. (Is 11)

In Daniel, he's the Son of Man, fully human but coming from heaven. (Dan 7:9-14)

And the anointed Prince who would forgive sin, instill righteousness, and judge the world. (Dan 9:24-27)

The Messianic theme is all *over* the Old Testament. Prophesying and foreshadowing an amazing figure who's able to accomplish every last part.

And in the *New* Testament, we find out it's Jesus. He fits all the descriptions to a "T".

So Jesus, as Messiah, is **the anointed one of God**. One of 3 aspects of his Messiahship. He's anointed. As in chosen, empowered, and set apart for special use.

Don't miss that.

➤ You say, "Okay, I hear you pastor. But is that found explicitly in the New Testament? "I mean, is Jesus *called* the Messiah somewhere? Or do we have to *infer* a bunch of things, and play a great big guessing game?"

Not at all. It's explicit. Like when Andrew, one of the 12, said to Peter, "*We have found the Messiah*." Referring to Jesus. Jn 1:41.

And later on, Peter himself said, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*." (Mt 16:16). And Martha too, "*I believe that you are the Christ*." (Jn 11:27)

Same thing. Because Christ *means* Messiah.

Christ is the English word for Christos, and Christos is the Greek equivalent of Messiah; in Hebrew. So Christ and Messiah are synonymous. It's explicit.

And it's not just that Jesus was *called* the Messiah in the New Testament, he became *synonymous* with the Messiah.

So much so, that after his resurrection, after he was *glorified*, the Apostles and early church began using the *title* as part of his *name*.

Dropping the article, the, and calling him Jesus, Christ. Jesus, Messiah.

Just like that song we sing. "Jesus Messiah, name above all names." You know it.

So the Messiahship of Jesus is not just *found* in the New Testament, it's all *over* the New Testament. Just like the Old.

Don't miss it. And don't miss him. Jesus is the *anointed* one, and Jesus is **the Christ**.

➤ And third here, don't miss his salvation. Like the disciples did.

They didn't realize that the words being ascribed to Jesus by the crowd, were legit.

Check it out. V13. *Hosanna!* [They shouted.] *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*. It's straight out of a Messianic Psalm. Word for word.

And the disciples must have been thinking, "No way. There's no way that applies to him."
Because they didn't understand.

What they did understand, is that *Hosanna* is a Hebrew word meaning "save us."

A word that over time, morphed into "the one who saves." Or Savior.

A Messianic reference that they didn't *connect* with Jesus.

As is the next phrase: *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*. (13)

Or, praise you, because we see you as coming in God's *name*; representing him.

That's the idea. And they missed that in the moment as well.

Messianic expressions of salvation straight out of **Ps 118:25-26**. Where it says:

Save us, we pray, O LORD! [Or in Hebrew – *Hosanna, O LORD!*] *O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!*

➤ It's a passage, in God's sovereignty, that would have been on the tip of the crowd's tongue, because God-fearing Jews *sang* those very words . . .

As they made their way to Jerusalem each time, for the various feasts. Like this one.***

So here they were, essentially saying, "Jesus, you're the one who saves.

You're **the Savior**.

Don't miss it like the disciples. Don't miss the fact that Jesus, as Messiah, is our Savior.

Not that the crowds knew what they were saying any more than the disciples.

They were probably thinking he was an *earthly* king; an earthly deliverer.

One who would restore the *nation*-state of Israel, not establish a completely *new* Israel; spiritual Israel.

➤ But at least they saw him as the Messiah. The one promised and anointed of old, to save his people.

The disciples didn't. They missed it.

Don't go there. Don't miss the point of Palm Sunday.

To inform us and remind us that Jesus is the Messiah; the Christ.

The anointed one of God, sent to save and deliver us from our sins.

Second, don't miss the fact that . . .

Jesus is Lord (v13-15)

That's the second characteristic of Jesus that Palm Sunday is intended to convey.

He's Lord. As in master, leader, ruler, authority.

It's implied by the *power* the crowd attributed to him, the *title* they gave him, and the *Scripture* he fulfilled. 3 more aspects.

➤ First is the *power* attributed to him. Jesus is Lord **because of his power**.

It's conveyed by the shouts of the crowd in the phrase – *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*.

Not only *representing* God, but implying that he has all the power and *authority* of God. The full backing of heaven behind him.

If you worked for General Motors these days, and a co-worker had walked into your office two weeks ago and said . . .

"Hey, I think we need to stop everything we're doing and start making ventilators," you probably would have said, "Whatever," and gone back to your work.

But if he walked in and said, "Hey, I just got off the phone with President Trump, and he said we need to start making ventilators," you'd jump.

Why? Because your co-worker comes in the name of the President of the United States.

He comes with all the power and authority of the *office* behind him.

Which basically makes him your boss for a moment. Your leader.

How much more, Jesus; *who comes in the name of the Lord*; the Father.

Making *him* Lord, because of the power and authority behind him.

Jesus is Lord because of his power.

➤ Second, he's Lord **because of his title**. The *label* they gave him.

Namely, *King of Israel*. V13b – *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!*"

He's not just *backed* with power and authority, he *has* power and authority. Because he's the rightful King. The rightful *ruler* of his people.

That's the implication of saying he's *the King of Israel*.

The question is, who is *Israel*? Who is Jesus king *of*? Now?

And the answer, is believers. The church.

We are the *Israel of God* as Paul says it in Gal 6:16.

Because *it is those of faith who are sons of Abraham* the Bible says (Gal 3:7). Faith in Jesus. And *only* those of faith.

For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. Rom 9:6. Only the children of promise do, it goes on to say. Only those who are saved and promised eternal life.

Or as Paul says it in Gal 3: *If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring*. New Testament Israel.

So as believers, we are Israel, and Jesus is our king. Our rightful ruler.

That's the second aspect of his Lordship.

Jesus is Lord because of the *title* assigned to him on Palm Sunday.

➤ And third, he's Lord **because of his fulfillment**. The *Scripture* he fulfilled. Referring to the prophecy of Zechariah in the *Old Testament*. Quoted here in v14. *Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written [in Zech 9:9], [15] "Fear not, daughter of Zion [people of Jerusalem; because it sat on Mt Zion]; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"* Jesus is Lord, because he fulfilled the Scriptures.

And not only because he rode a donkey, but as Zechariah *also* said, because he's righteous and has salvation. (**Zech 9:9**)
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Jesus is Lord because of the *power* he has, the *title* he wears, and the *Scripture* he fulfilled.*****
Don't miss it. Don't miss him. And don't miss out.

Especially so, because . . .

Jesus is worthy (13)

He's worthy of all that. Worthy of our worship, worthy of our joy, worthy of our love, our devotion, our obedience, allegiance. You name it.
That's the idea of the palm branches. They were a visible way of saying, "You're worthy, and we worship you!" V13.

The crowd heard that Jesus was coming, *so they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him*. Waving them as he passed by, we know from the other Gospels. Why? Because palm branches were a traditional way of welcoming new royalty, and expressing their allegiance, joy, and worship.

It started all the way back in Lev 23, with the worship of ancient Israel during *another* feast that they celebrated each year – the Feast of Tabernacles.
Where they cut palm branches and leafy branches it says (Lev 23:40), and waved them during worship to symbolize their *longing* for a deliverer; a Savior.

And after 15 centuries of that, here he was. Right in front of them.
So they waved their palm branches *this* time, to express their *joy* in worship.
For hundreds of years it was their longing; showing their *faith* in worship.
Now, it was joy. Because the Savior and deliverer they had been looking for, was here.
Worthy of all their praise, all their joy, and all their love.

➤ How much more today? With us? Who know the *rest* of the story.
That he didn't come to establish an *earthly* kingdom, but a heavenly one.
Offering redemption and dying to make it happen.
Forgiving our sins and delivering us from the consequences.
Rising again and giving us hope.
Establishing his church and assembling his people.

All of which makes him all the *more* worthy of our worship. All the *more* worthy of our praise. All the *more* worthy of our joy; and love; and devotion.
Jesus is worthy, all the more.

Don't miss it. And don't miss out. Renew your passion and refresh your worship, palm branches or not. Quarantine or not. Pandemic or not. Stir crazy or not. He's still worthy.

And last, don't miss the fact that . . .

Jesus is coming (Rev 7:9-10)

You say, "How is that a part of Palm Sunday?"
Because one of the purposes of Palm Sunday is to prepare us for *heaven*. True.
It's the best part of the whole thing. And most overlooked.

We celebrate Palm Sunday to not only remember Christ's *first* triumphant entry, but to prepare for his second; his return. His coming, as King of *kings* and Lord of *lords*. This time, riding on the clouds, instead of a donkey. And receiving our worship on a throne, instead of a hill. This is just practice; preparation.

Because the Apostle John tells us in **Rev 7:9-10**, in a vision of heaven at the end of time:
After this [after hearing about the completion and fullness of the church] I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

➤ Do you see it? Just like the *Old Testament* believers waved their branches in *longing* for Hosanna . . .
And just like the Palm Sunday crowd did so to praise him as an *earthly* king . . .
We will stand before the throne in *heaven* someday, with palm branches in *our* hands, and worship him as Lord of *all*. Rejoicing greatly, that *our* longing is complete . . .
Just like the crowds on Palm Sunday.*****
That's the point. Palm Sunday prepares us for heaven, and the coming of Christ.

Don't miss it. Don't miss the point, and don't miss his coming. (**Psalm 24:7-10**)
[7] Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. [In other words, turn your eyes upon Jesus, and open your heart to receive him.]
[Who is he?] [8] Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! . . . [10] The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!
The one worthy of worship. Lord of all. Jesus Messiah. And coming soon.
Don't miss it.

Pray – Jesus, you *are* worthy. *Worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing*, forever and ever. (Rev 5:12) Oh God, rend the heavens and come down, and find us living for you, with Hosanna on our lips. You're Jesus Messiah, the God who saves; worthy of all our praise.