

“He’s Coming!”

Scripture: John 12:12-19

Graphics: palms, Last Supper, donkey, road

Big Truth: Jesus was coming into Jerusalem for the end. Yet, he was coming to show the world, who has gathered to see Him, what it all meant before He died on the cross. The disciples and the crowds may not have understood it, but they would. We have the full story and that should create in us the anticipation and joy of knowing that it’s all going to be the way God wants it. Every follower of Jesus at PUMC is called to joyfully celebrate Jesus, even though we know the best is yet to come! We are called to go because Jesus has come.

Focus Phrase: Jesus has come so that we will go in His name!

1. Introduction

- A. Palm Sunday is always such a great day in the life of the church!
- B. It’s not Easter yet, but Sunday’s coming. It’s near the end of Lent, when we looked inward to reflect on our sin and repentance, and grow in our walk with Jesus. In our case, we’ve spent this time around this table with Jesus on the night before he was arrested and then taken to the cross.
- C. If you’ve been fasting something, or gave something up for Lent, then you have ONE MORE WEEK!
- D. Palm Sunday also isn’t Good Friday, that darkest of days when Jesus died on a cross for you and me, although that’s coming this week too.
- E. Palm Sunday became part of the tradition of the Christian church pretty early on in our history. The Church’s celebration of Palm Sunday comes directly from the description of a day in Jesus’ life in the Gospel of John, which we’ll read this morning.
- F. In all four gospels, however, the *Triumphal Entry of Jesus* into Jerusalem is included...when Jesus came to Jerusalem for the very final week of his earthly life. He’d been traveling around the countryside, teaching people how to love and forgive and serve as God commands and desires of His people. He had spent time eating with the people that others considered sinners and outcasts.
- G. Jesus went from town-to-town healing people from things like leprosy and possession by evil spirits and suffering from diseases.
- H. Church! **THIS IS SUPERNATURAL STUFF!** What Jesus did was spiritual warfare stuff...things that set in motion the righting of the world against evil!
- I. These aren’t just nice stories about a man who walked around and taught some helpful things. Jesus is THE INCARNATION of God Himself in human form, who came to the WORLD to SAVE US from EVERYTHING that hinders, destroys, and tempts us to live a life focused on ourselves...and not on God.

- J. THAT is why every single gospel writer included a Palm Sunday narrative. It's the reason why it's such an important day in the rhythm of the Christian church year. AND, it's the reason we gather HERE every Sunday!
- K. We sing Hosanna (Save us, we pray!) to the One who has come "In the Name of the Lord" (as we sang earlier)...to give praise and glory to Jesus.
- L. But, see, the disciples and the crowds that gathered that day had a VERY different experience of Palm Sunday than we do. They didn't yet know the rest of the story.
 - i. They saw Jesus' miracles - and we'll talk about what I think is Jesus' most important miracle this morning;
 - ii. They knew that Jesus had some strange and wonderful things to teach and say; they knew other people wanted to be near Jesus.
- M. But, they did not, could not, fully understand what was coming.
- N. Church, this week is THE week. This is our Playoffs, March Madness, and final Four all rolled into one. Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter! Are you ready?
- O. This is our Main Event. This is the Christian Church's celebration of everything that's at the core of WHO we are and WHY we're here. This is the reason for our hope and the promise of our salvation!
- P. If this week doesn't FIRE YOU UP as a follower of Jesus, then let me invite you to take this week, lay EVERYTHING else aside, and stare at Jesus, and simply say, as many times as possible, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna!"
- Q. In today's scripture...he's coming. He's coming! HE'S COMING!
- R. That's the title of this message and if you're taking notes, here's our focus for today: *Jesus has come so that we will go in His name!*
- S. Let's Pray before we get into John 12...this is supernatural stuff that requires a full measure of the Holy Spirit's presence and power...
- T. PRAY!
- U. John chapter 12...verse 12.

2. Scripture

A. READ John 12:12-13

- i. The Passover festival was THE biggest festival of the year for the Jewish people. At the beginning of John 12, the author wrote that this was the first day of the festival, which would've been Sunday - and that's how Palm Sunday got its name and became part of the tradition of the Christian Church. It was Sunday. And there were palms. Bam!

- ii. Now, we've been spending time at this table over the last few weeks. Yet, you'll notice that something is different about this table this morning. Stuff is missing. There are no cups or plates of bread. There are no pillows or places to sit.
- iii. And there's good reason for that. See, in today's scripture we've gone back in time, so to speak, from the events of John 13, 14, and 15...to the events of John 12. The disciples were celebrating the Passover meal in John 13-15.
 - a. And it's at that meal that Jesus washed their feet to show His love for them. It's at that Last Supper that Jesus called them to love others in the same way.
 - b. It's then that Jesus predicted his death to come, but told the disciples (and us) that we needed to believe in God's plan, have hope for everlasting life in Christ, to allow the Holy Spirit (the Paraclete) to come alongside them after He was gone...
 - c. And to live...to live the Chosen Life of a disciple.
- iv. That week - which ended after that table - started right here in John 12...as Jesus made his way to Jerusalem, to that Upper Room, for that meal with those disciples, to the cross on Friday...and then to the tomb.
- v. And, I don't want to spoil anything for this week, but (whisper) He's not still in the tomb! He's Alive! Hold that thought for a week...
- vi. And the disciples weren't alone in Jerusalem. In fact, HUGE crowds were gathered there for the Passover festival, which lasted all week.
- vii. And, as crowds tend to do, they move as crowds. I've been to enough rock concerts to know that when the crowds moves in a particular direction, you can try to fight against it, but you're basically going with the crowd. And, half of the time, you're not even sure WHY the crowd is moving in a particular direction or WHAT is happening where you're going.
- viii. I sense that some of that was occurring here. Some people had heard all that Jesus had been doing. "He's Coming!" And someone, I assume it was the disciples, starting talking about the fact that Jesus was coming to town for the festival. "He's Coming!"
- ix. At this point in Jesus' life, he'd been enough places, seen enough people, HEALED enough people and taught enough amazing truths, that he had a full-blown reputation.
 - a. He told Nicodemus, one the religious leaders that God so loved the world that He gave his only son, that whoever believes in Him would have everlasting life. That was in John 3.
 - b. He told the woman at the well that He was the Messiah in John 4.

- c. He healed lots of people in John 5.
- d. He fed thousands in John 6. And on and on through the gospels...
- e. He HAD people's attention for sure.
- x. So, when the crowd heard that **Jesus was coming** to Jerusalem, they did what they KNEW would send a clear message to Him that they wanted Him to be their ruler and king.
- xi. What was it? Well, they treated him like they would a ruler and king: they grabbed palm branches, and ran out to meet him on the road.
- xii. Now, just like that concert crowd, some may have known who Jesus was, yet others were following the crowds because obviously something cool is happening. Either way, Jesus would come into town...and the crowds began shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord - the King of Israel!"
 - a. "Hosanna," in Hebrew - the language of the Jews - means "Save us, we pray!" It's like a fervent prayer to someone who can help in times of trouble.
 - b. That whole phrase came directly from Psalm 118:25-26 which reads, "Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord."
- xiii. The people were looking for a King...a Savior! Desperately! Yet, Jesus wasn't about to conform to their idea of an earthly king...although he WOULD become they Savior.
- xiv. Here's what Jesus did to try to help the crowds understand as he was coming to town...verse 14...

B. READ John 12:14-16

- i. Not a great leader on a white horse, by any means...but a humble man - a humble king? - riding on a donkey.
- ii. It's almost comical to envision. A full-grown man riding on a donkey. Riding into Jerusalem. Some of the crowd would've missed it completely had some of them not recognized that it was Jesus.
- iii. And Jesus chose that donkey for a VERY specific reason. Simply put, it fulfilled a prophecy that Jesus knew well from the OT book of Zechariah 9:9 which was always view as a prophecy about the coming Messiah.
- iv. THIS was a statement...THIS was how Jesus chose to come to town. And, not only were people not understanding it...the disciples weren't either.

- v. In verse 16, we simply read that the disciples didn't understand what was happening, at first (!), but, after Jesus was glorified, then they remembered all these things.
- vi. The proverbial rearview mirror is a powerful tool to move into the future.
- vii. And, Jesus would tell them SO MUCH MORE once they got to **the table** with Him. He would teach them plainly, as friends, what the Chosen Life would look like going forward.
- viii. And then, after it was all said and done...not only would they look back at THIS DAY when Jesus rode into Jerusalem...but they would also remember the table, the lessons, AND then mission.
- ix. See, because it wasn't just about them...look at verse 17.

C. READ John 12:17-19

- i. Here's where we get to Jesus greatest miracle apart from the resurrection itself - the raising of Lazarus from the grave.
- ii. Now, we can debate that someday and that's not to say that Jesus' miracles of healings and feedings and exorcism weren't AWESOME!
- iii. But besides the fact that Jesus walked out of his OWN grave under His own power, Jesus only really raised ONE person from the dead - dead, who had been dead for 3 days...Lazarus.
- iv. This crowd KNEW about THAT miracle. News like THAT travels fast. Some of them were there when it happened. And if they had a witness about who Jesus was and what He could do, it was THAT! The power over death itself!
- v. It was because they had seen Jesus do THAT, along with everything else, that they, "...continued to bear witness" and it was the "...reason they went out to meet him."
- vi. Because Jesus was coming, the crowds were willing to go out and tell others about this Jesus who had done amazing things!

3. Application

- A. Church, He's coming to us! On this Palm Sunday in 2021, we celebrate the fact that He came to Jerusalem that day 2,000+ years ago. We remember and reflect on what that meant and what it means today.
- B. But, like the disciples after Jesus was raised from the dead, we have the whole story - and in even greater measure! It doesn't make sense for us to transport ourselves back to Jerusalem on the first day of the Passover Festival in AD 33 without bringing with us the full weight of the knowledge and belief in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

- C. In fact, we also need to add the Incarnation at Christmas, the witness of the early church in Acts, Paul's letters to the churches of the Ancient near East, and every Holy Spirit-inspired thing that's been written, lived, and celebrated in the church of Jesus Christ for the last 2,000 years.
- D. AND, we must remember and reflect on the fact that He's NOT DONE YET! He's coming AGAIN!
- E. Because He came once as a baby and will be coming back as our Eternal King, our calling for today - for this week - is to raise our palm branches in praise!
- F. And if there was any other time in history when we're ready to shout, "Save us, we pray!" it's right now.
- G. I honestly don't know what the church - this church or any other church - will look like fully going forward post-COVID. As leaders, we don't know if there are people out there who have just walked away, have joined in online, or who are still planning to re-engage in more ways.
- H. Time will tell. But what I DO know is that **God's not yet done with the church** - this church or THE church.
- I. Not only are we Christmas people and Palm Sunday people, but we are also Good Friday people, and Easter people, and Pentecost people. And Sunday people! And Jesus isn't done with you!
- J. We are today people and tomorrow people. Jesus is alive and well and living in US! We'll put an exclamation point on that this week, especially next Sunday.
- K. But your mission now - now that you've got that palm branch waving and you're shouting Hosanna with the FULL WEIGHT of the power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus' Good News - is to go out and witness to His amazing grace!
- L. Jesus has come so that you will go in His name!

4. Conclusion

- A. If you can, pick up that palm branch that you got this morning and hold it in your hand.
- B. I have one homework assignment for this week: spend this week with that palm in your hand (maybe not literally while you're sleeping). But envision yourself standing by that road, waiting for Jesus to come.
- C. As you do, there will be people standing next to you this week - family, friends, co-workers, strangers.
- D. Simply tell them that you're excited about Easter. If they ask why, then give them the reason for your hope. Give them the reason for your excitement. Give them the Good News...it may be very simple.
- E. Witness to the Jesus that's coming! Go and tell them he's coming.

- F. Invite them to worship with us online. Share it on social media, “Hey, I can’t wait to celebrate Easter morning at PUMC! Would you join me?”
- G. Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord - the King of Israel!
- H. Our King! Jesus!
- I. PRAY!