

PALM SUNDAY – IT'S MESSAGE

John 12:1-27

Message Theme: *The Truth of Jesus' Life Reveals Hearts.*

Intro.:

Context:

1. Chapter 11:53 tells us that the Jewish leaders had set out to kill Jesus.
2. Therefore, Jesus determined to lay low for a while.
3. Soon afterward, they entered the Passover season (a large annual observance where the population would swell to hundreds of thousands).
4. It was a week of observing Israel's release from Egypt, the sacrifice of a lamb, and the deliverance of the death angel that passed over Egypt that preceded Israel's exodus from Egypt.
5. This account of John 12 is now 6 days before the Passover; Jesus would be crucified within the week.
6. **Chapter 12 is significant** in that it reveals that Jesus' earthly ministry is now complete, and it is now His hour to be glorified (relating to His death, resurrection, and ascension).
7. **Map** regarding the geographical context of the text, Bethany to Jerusalem.
8. He has arrived at Simon the leper's house in Bethany. Also, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus' hometown.
9. The next day, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem on a donkey. ***His purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to publicly proclaim to be their Messiah and King of Israel, fulfilling Old Testament prophecy.***

I. WORSHIP

A. Mary Honored and Worshiped Jesus vss, 1-3

John 12:1–3 (ESV) Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. 3 Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

- Matthew 26 tells us that this was taking place not only in Bethany but also in the house of Simon the leper, whom Jesus had healed.
- This account is also recorded in Matthew 26 and Mark 14. There, we read that Mary anointed Jesus' feet, as recorded by John, and also His head.

- Mary takes a pound of very costly perfume, pure nard, and anointed Jesus' feet and wipes it with her hair.
- This perfume costs more than a year's worth of wages.
- Anointing His feet was a servant's act; wiping his feet with her hair was an act of humility.
- Mary's worship was lavish—she would not give worship to the Lord that cost her nothing (like King David).
 - Her worship was not like the people in the book of Malachi who brought their deformed and worthless animals to be sacrificed.
- Mary's worship was that of a servant—for the lowliest slave of the house would refresh the soiled feet of the guests. (vs. 3)
- Mary's worship was an act of humility—when she let down her hair to wipe Jesus feet, which was something that Jewish women did not do in public. She was oblivious as to what others thought of her in her devotion of worship toward Jesus.
- Mary's worship filled the house with fragrance. (vs. 3)
- Mary's worship proclaimed a message.
 - **It was prophetic**, though she did not realize it at the time, as we will see in **vs. 7.**
- Yet, Mary's unbridled love, devotion, and worship were misunderstood and criticized.

B. Judas' Criticized vss. 4-8

John 12:4–8 (ESV) But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. 7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

- Judas began criticizing Mary's extravagant worship, and, sad to say, according to the other gospel accounts, his critical spirit spread to the other disciples.
- Judas presented his criticism in a noble light of being concerned for the poor, but his criticism came out of a heart of greed and betrayal.
- He had been stealing money given to the ministry for his personal use.
- Judas was disillusioned and disappointed in the direction Jesus had been heading. He was hoping Jesus would overthrow Rome, and Judas would be in the inner circle of Jesus' cabinet.
- Jesus' rebuke undoubtedly played a significant role in Judas' determination to betray Jesus due to a spirit of offense and bitterness.
- What a contrast Judas' heart and actions are to Mary's. She gives generously of what she has to Jesus; Judas selfishly absorbs other's possessions for himself.

- In fact, Judas will later even sell information to betray Jesus for merely 30 pieces of silver—the worth of a common slave.

NOTE: 12:9-11 is added commentary to communicate the atmosphere and climate of this particular time.

John 12:9–11 (NLT) When all the people heard of Jesus' arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. 10 Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, 11 for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus.

- Large crowds are gathering to see Jesus, but also Lazarus who had been resurrected.
- Chief priests did not only desire to kill Jesus but also Lazarus.
- Many were leaving the influence of Israel's religious leaders and were following Jesus—causing the concern of Israel's leaders.

II. LAUDED

A. Jesus Identified as King vss. 12-15

John 12:12–15 (ESV) The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast 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!"

- The next day after the feast, Jesus moves under the *kairos* timing of His Father to enter Jerusalem.
- Jesus' person and works have created a stir in the city, as people from out of the area have arrived and begun to hear about Him.
- According to the other gospels, Jesus approaches the hill known as Mount of Olives between Bethany and Jerusalem and directs 2 of His disciples to obtain a donkey's colt.
- This is the fulfillment of the OT prophecy of Zech. 9:9.

Zechariah 9:9 (ESV) 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.

- **SIGNIFICANCE:** In times of war, a conqueror would ride into town on a stallion, but in times of peace, a king would ride into town on a donkey (the donkey had a different value in those days).
- Jesus, riding on a donkey's colt, declared He was King of Peace.

B. The People's Response vss.16-19

John 12:16–19 (ESV) His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. 17 The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. 18 The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”

- As Jesus rides down into the Kidron Valley and up the opposite hillside into Jerusalem, the crowd begins to grow, throwing down their coats and palm branches in front of Him, shouting, “Hosanna! (**save now**) Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.”
- This is a quote from Psalm 118:25-26.
- This is a frenzy of an atmosphere; the whole city is stirred, and John tells us that the disciples did not understand what all of this meant (vs. 16).
- The other gospels tell us that the religious leaders demanded that Jesus restrain the people, including children, from crying out these verbal applauses. (**cancel**)
- Jesus said that the rocks would cry out if they stopped because God’s purposes would not be stopped.
- Again, we see the mixed reactions surrounding Jesus.
- Some loved and followed Him.
- Still others despised Him, such as the religious rulers.
- Some were confused and trying to figure out where to put all of this.
- **Luke** tells us that when Jesus entered the city, He became heavy of heart and wept in the middle of this celebration.

Luke 19:41–44 (ESV) And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

- Jesus knew that the shouts of praise and songs of Hosanna were empty, and in just a couple of days, they would turn to shouts of “Crucify Him!”
- Jesus, as the ultimate servant, was not swayed from His mission or caught up in the moment.

III. LORDSHIP

A. Kingdom Principles Declared vss. 20-25

John 12:20–25 (NLT) Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration 21 paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, “Sir,

we want to meet Jesus.” 22 Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. 23 Jesus replied, “Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. 24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. 25 Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.

- It is interesting to note the request of **verses 21-22** and to note Jesus’ response.
- Some Greek individuals (*Gentiles*) visiting Jerusalem for the Passover asked for an audience with Jesus, He then begins talking about;
 - 1) It is time for the Son of Man to enter His glory. (**vs. 23**)
 - 2) Death is required for life. (**vs. 24**)
 - Wheat kernels must be planted in the ground and die to produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.
 - 3) Regard for your life in this world determines the next. (**vs. 25**).
- Jesus was always moving by the sovereign timing of God the Father. He answers the request that “now is the hour” or the time for the Son of Man to be glorified.!!
- Jesus used the agricultural world to draw an analogy and truth of God’s kingdom.
- Life breaks forth out of death!! This is a kingdom truth.

B. Kingdom Principles Applied to Jesus’ Followers **vs. 26**

John 12:26 (NLT) Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

- Jesus now transforms this truth from a prophetic statement about His life to its overarching yet foundational principle in His kingdom.
- True followers of Jesus will be people who are willing to give up all self-interest and give themselves to God.
- If you deny or refuse God’s rule in your life due to personal self-interests in the things of this world—you will lose your life in the truest sense!
- The Church of Western Culture dilutes this message. We are fearful of demanding what Jesus demands.
- He doesn’t want merely your time, energy, skills, gifts, or financial resources and properties—he demands all of you, your entire life!

C. Jesus Models the Kingdom Principles **vs. 27**

John 12:27 (NLT) “Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came!

IV. APPLICATION

- We see three different expressions of people following Jesus.

A. Worship and Honor - Mary and Martha

- Mary and Martha gave a most precious treasure that cost them.
- Mary gave herself away in her humility, not caring about reputation; she was thoroughly invested and devoted to Jesus in a selfless manner.

B. Exploit - Judas

- Judas expected Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom, escape Rome's oppression, and gain a prominent position in Jesus' worldwide kingdom.
- He was filled with temporal interest versus an interest in Jesus' eternal designs.
- He exploited and scandalized the ministry of Jesus accordingly.
- **Exploit: can mean to *take advantage of for one's own end.***
- There are some who associate with Jesus for temporal purposes.

C. Fickle - The Palm Sunday Crowd

- They celebrated Jesus, joined in the celebration, and joined in the popular movement.
- In less than 5 days, when it was not safe to follow Jesus, they abandoned Jesus and even turned against Him.
- They had not counted the cost. They were not willing to lose their lives in Jesus.
- Many today associate with Jesus when there is no cost, when and where it is not dangerous to do so. When it is convenient.

D. Sold Out - True Followers Like Jesus

- They give themselves up and are ready to die like a kernel of wheat that is put in the ground.
- We may not understand what all that involves at first, but as it becomes revealed, we are willing to give ourselves to whatever the Lord asks.
- We then become true Jesus-followers!!!
- Mary and Martha worshipped, Judas betrayed, crowds celebrated then abandoned.
- But a true follower of Jesus is identified by being one who gives themselves up to fully in following Jesus!!