

Triumphal Entry

Journey to the Cross

Transition: This is week three in journeying to the cross with Jesus. Last week we discussed the story about Mary and her anointing of Jesus' feet. Mary is one of Lazarus' sisters, and Lazarus is the one whom Jesus had recently raised up from the grave. After raising Lazarus, Jesus and His disciples headed off to the wilderness of Ephraim for a short time. Six days before the Feast of Passover, Jesus and the disciples return to Bethany, the hometown of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, who host a dinner in His honor. It is not absolutely clear that Mary knew she was actually preparing Jesus for His impending burial, but certainly Jesus knew it (John 12:7) and He honored her for it. The next day, Jesus will return to Jerusalem.

Context: This week we are following Jesus' return to Jerusalem, which happened five days prior to the Feast of Passover. By Jesus' day, the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread had melded into one grand event. Since the Feast of Unleavened Bread was one of three Jewish pilgrimage feasts, Jerusalem was crowded with people. (Pilgrimage feasts were God-appointed celebrations where every adult Jewish male was expected to make the trek to Jerusalem to worship the Lord together with the rest of his Israelite brethren.) And there was one more element...many of the Jews were anxiously anticipating the arrival of Israel's long-awaited deliverer, the Messiah. The excitement and expectation of this was almost palpable...especially as people became aware of the miracles that Jesus had been doing.

Opening Question:

- When you were growing up, what celebrations did you enjoy? What did you enjoy about the celebration? What was it like in the days leading up to the actual celebration?

Scripture/Storing: John 12:12-19 & Luke 19:28-46

Discipleship Questions:

- According to Luke's account, Jesus Himself arranged to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Luke 19:29-31). Why do you think He did this? (See also John 12:14-15.) What meaning does His doing this have for you personally?
- In John's account, the large crowd that celebrated Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem was the same crowd who had witnessed Jesus bring Lazarus back to life. In Luke's account, he mentions the people who celebrated Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem as "the whole multitude of his disciples." Later, in both gospels, everyone deserts Jesus. How might we do something similar today? How do we prevent it from happening in our own lives?
- In Luke 19:39, some of the Pharisees rebuked Jesus for not rebuking what His disciples were saying about Him. What in particular was offensive to the Pharisees? What offends people today about Jesus? Have you ever interacted with someone offended by Jesus? If so, share the story. How did you handle it? Would you do anything differently?
- When Jesus answers the Pharisees, He remarks that if the crowd was silent, "the very stones would cry out." What does this mean and what meaning does it have for you in your life?
- Luke shares Jesus' weeping for Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44). Why is Jesus so upset? What is your reaction to His doing this? How does it influence your view of Jesus?
- Jesus is also upset about what's been going on at the temple. Specifically, what is He upset about? How might we make a similar mistake as the people whom Jesus ran out? What can you do not to make this mistake?
- What has the Holy Spirit taught you today?