

Overview

In many Bible translations this section of scripture is labeled the Triumphal Entry. In the eyes of everyone except Jesus this might be a good title. He was entering into His final week. This entry was to His crucifixion. The crowd was looking for the Messiah. Their idea of triumph was for someone to deliver them from Roman rule. The crowd wanted a man to come in and unite the nations, rally the troops. Simply put they had wrong expectations.

Take a moment and think about what Jesus was experiencing, feeling, and seeing during His final week. During His ministry he performed many miracles: feeding large crowds, walking on water, raising Lazarus, healing lepers, healing the blind, etc... His fame had spread throughout the whole country. The very acts He did to show He was the Son of God were misinterpreted. People were not so much interested in who He was as they were in what He could do for them. Does this sound familiar? A lot of us can fall into the trap of not really wanting Jesus to be Lord of our lives as much as we want Him to do what we want. Deliver us from our problems. Heal our sicknesses. We kneel to Jesus, but with conditions

The crowd celebrated Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem. Several translations say the crowd was stirred (Matthew 21:10). This doesn't really convey their excitement. The crowd was literally at an earthquake power level of celebration. They wanted their Savior. They wanted the Messiah. BUT they wanted Him on their conditions. For them to kneel He had to fulfill their expectations. He must be the King they wanted.

Jesus looked around at the shouting crowd knowing this same group would be yelling for His death in just 5 days. It wasn't just the crowd that had the wrong expectations. It was His disciples as well. Peter rebuked Jesus when He told them of His pending death. Judas wanted to follow a King not a suffering servant. Where are you at on Palm Sunday? What is your expectations of Jesus? Do you celebrate Him when things are good, but turn away when your expectations are not met? I think all of us are in the crowd somewhere. We shout Hosanna one moment and then sin and turn away the next. I would like to think that I would have been different on the original Palm Sunday. Surely I would have understood exactly who Jesus was. I fail too much today to think I would have done differently then. We are all in the crowd somewhere.

Bible Study: Matthew 21:1-11

1. Read Matthew 21:1-11. What are some traditions you have for Palm Sunday?
2. In what ways can being caught up in the excitement of a crowd be dangerous?
3. This same crowd would be calling for Jesus' death in a week. He wasn't acting like the King they wanted. What happens when Jesus doesn't meet your expectations?
4. What can you do to stay focused on God even when things are not going your way?
5. Judas sold Jesus out for 30 pieces of silver. Peter denied Jesus by the fire. Every one of Jesus' disciples ran when He was arrested. Why do believers compromise their faith when the cost of following is too high?

6. The question is not if we sell Jesus out, the question is at what price? What area of your life would you like to see your faith strengthened?
7. Do you see yourself in the crowd? Why or why not?