

Bible Study Guide: Palm Sunday – The Beginning of the Journey to the Cross

 Source Transcript:

Big Idea

Palm Sunday reveals the tension between human expectation and God’s true mission—calling us to move from shallow celebration to deep surrender.

Theme

Jesus enters as King, but not the kind people expected. He comes not to fix circumstances, but to transform hearts.

Core Scriptures

Matthew 21:1–11

The Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem

Zechariah 9:9

“See, your king comes to you... gentle and riding on a donkey.”

Introduction: The Start of Holy Week

Palm Sunday marks:

- The beginning of Holy Week
- The final journey of Jesus to the cross
- A moment of celebration that quickly turns into rejection

Key Insight:

“The same crowd that shouts ‘Hosanna’ will soon shout ‘Crucify Him.’”

This moment forces us to ask:

- What kind of King do we expect Jesus to be?

Main Point 1: Jesus Enters as King—but Not as Expected

Explanation

Jesus enters Jerusalem:

- Riding on a donkey (symbol of humility)
- Not on a war horse (symbol of power)

The crowd expects:

- A political savior
- Freedom from Roman rule

But Jesus comes to:

- Bring spiritual transformation
- Restore relationship with God

“He is not a political king—He is a spiritual Savior.”

Application

- What kind of “king” do I expect Jesus to be in my life?
- Am I looking for a fixer—or a transformer?

Sticky Quote:

“Jesus didn’t come to meet your expectations—He came to change your life.”

Main Point 2: The Human Heart is Fickle

Explanation

The same people:

- Celebrate Jesus on Sunday
- Call for His death by Friday

Spiritual Truth

Human nature:

- Is emotional
- Is inconsistent
- Turns quickly when expectations are not met

“We turn on a dime when we don’t get what we want.”

Application

- Where has my faith been inconsistent?
- Do I follow Jesus only when things go my way?

Sticky Quote:

“Faith based on feelings will always fluctuate.”

Main Point 3: Jesus Knows the Cost of the Journey

Explanation

As Jesus enters Jerusalem:

- He knows what is coming
- He knows He will suffer and die

He even:

- Weeps over the city
- Recognizes people will reject Him

“He knows what this moment will lead to.”

Spiritual Truth

Jesus willingly walks toward:

- Betrayal
- Pain
- The cross

Application

- Am I willing to follow Jesus even when it's hard?
- Do I understand the cost of discipleship?

Sticky Quote:

“Jesus walked toward the cross—knowing exactly what it would cost.”

Main Point 4: We Often Want a Fix—Not Transformation

Explanation

The crowd wanted:

- Their circumstances changed

Jesus wanted:

- Their hearts transformed

“We want the fix—God wants transformation.”

Spiritual Truth

Transformation requires:

- Surrender
- Change
- Death to self

Application

- Am I asking God to fix things—or change me?
- What area of my life needs transformation?

Sticky Quote:

“Transformation is harder than a quick fix—but it lasts forever.”

Main Point 5: Palm Sunday Leads to the Cleansing of the Temple

Explanation

After entering Jerusalem, Jesus:

- Goes to the temple
- Overturns tables
- Calls out corruption

“This was status quo—but it was wrong.”

Spiritual Truth

Jesus confronts:

- Hypocrisy
- Corruption
- Empty religion

Personal Reflection

The temple represents:

- Our hearts

Application

- What needs to be “overturned” in my life?
- What have I allowed to become “normal” but isn’t right?

Sticky Quote:

“Jesus will confront what corrupts your heart.”

Main Point 6: Holy Week Reveals the Depth of Sin

Explanation

As the week progresses:

- Jesus is betrayed (Judas)
- Denied (Peter)

- Abandoned (disciples)

Spiritual Truth

Sin:

- Affects everyone
- Shows up in different ways

“We all have the capacity to turn away.”

Application

- Where do I see sin in my life?
- How have I turned away from Jesus?

Sticky Quote:

“The cross reveals both our sin and our need for a Savior.”

Main Point 7: Jesus Still Chooses Love

Explanation

Despite everything:

- Jesus continues forward
- Jesus forgives
- Jesus sacrifices

“He gives His life so we can have life.”

Spiritual Truth

Jesus' love is:

- Unconditional
- Sacrificial
- Complete

Application

- Do I truly understand the depth of His love?
- How can I reflect that love to others?

Sticky Quote:

“Jesus didn't turn away—He gave everything.”

Main Point 8: Don't Be Spiritually Stubborn

Illustration from Transcript

The donkey that refused to move:

“Don't be the donkey that digs in its heels.”

Spiritual Meaning

We often:

- Resist change
- Avoid truth
- Refuse surrender

Spiritual Challenge

Growth requires:

- Movement
- Openness
- Humility

Application

- Where am I resisting God right now?
- What step is God asking me to take?

Sticky Quote:

“Don’t resist the very thing God is trying to do in you.”

Main Point 9: Recognizing Our Need for a Savior

Explanation

Before we understand Jesus:

- We must understand sin

“We are all sinners saved by grace.”

Spiritual Truth

Without recognizing sin:

- We minimize the cross

- We miss the power of salvation

Application

- Do I truly understand my need for Jesus?
- Am I relying on grace or my own effort?

Sticky Quote:

“You cannot understand the Savior without understanding sin.”

Main Point 10: Palm Sunday Invites Us to Prepare Our Hearts

Explanation

Palm Sunday is not just:

- A celebration

It is:

- A preparation

Spiritual Invitation

Slow down:

- Reflect
- Examine your heart
- Prepare for the cross and resurrection

“This is the time to slow down and reflect.”

Application

- How can I intentionally walk through Holy Week?
- What will I do differently this week?

Sticky Quote:

“Palm Sunday prepares your heart for the cross.”

Discussion Questions

1. What expectations do you have of Jesus?
 2. Where has your faith been inconsistent?
 3. Are you seeking transformation or just a quick fix?
 4. What needs to be overturned in your life?
 5. Where might you be resisting God?
-

Practical Application Steps

1. Slow Down This Week

- Spend time reflecting daily

2. Examine Your Heart

- Identify areas needing change

3. Surrender Control

- Let God transform you

4. Walk Through Holy Week Intentionally

- Engage with each day spiritually

5. Remember the Cross

- Reflect on what Jesus has done
-

Closing Prayer

Father,
Thank You for sending Jesus as our King.
Help us to see Him not as we expect,
but as who He truly is.

Search our hearts,
remove what does not belong,
and lead us into transformation.

Teach us to follow You faithfully,
not just in celebration,
but in surrender.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Final Takeaway

Palm Sunday is not just about praising Jesus—it's about preparing your heart to follow Him all the way to the cross.