

The King You Want vs The King You Need

Matthew 21:1–11

As we step into Palm Sunday, we come to a moment filled with energy, celebration, and expectation. The crowd welcomes Jesus as King—but not fully understanding the kind of King He is or the kind of salvation He brings. As you prepare for your Life Group, take time to read Matthew 21:1–11 slowly, and consider how this moment connects not only to what Jesus does next, but ultimately to the cross. The question Palm Sunday invites us to wrestle with is simple, but profound: **Do we recognize Jesus as He truly is—or only as we expect Him to be?**

Information

What details stand out to you in how Jesus prepares for His entrance into Jerusalem (vv.1–3)? What do these details reveal about His awareness and intentionality?

Matthew connects this moment to prophecy (vv.4–5). Why is it significant that Jesus enters on a donkey? What does this communicate about the kind of King He is?

What actions and words from the crowd (vv.8–9) reveal their expectations of Jesus? What do phrases like “Hosanna” and “Son of David” tell us about what they hoped He would do?

In verse 10, the city asks, “Who is this?” How does the crowd’s answer in verse 11 fall short of fully describing who Jesus is?

Understanding

In what ways does Jesus redefine what it means to be King in this passage? How is His approach different from what the crowd—and we—might naturally expect?

Why do you think it’s so easy to misunderstand Jesus, even when we are close to Him or familiar with Him?

How does this moment connect to what Jesus does next in the temple (Matthew 21:12–13)? What does that reveal about what He came to address first?

The crowd expected external change (political, cultural, immediate). Jesus came to address something deeper. How would you describe the real problem Jesus came to solve?

How does Palm Sunday point forward to the cross? Why is it important to understand that Jesus came not just to lead, but to save through sacrifice?

Living

Where in your life have you experienced the tension of Jesus not meeting your expectations? How did you respond?

Are there ways you may be subtly shaping Jesus into the kind of “King” you want Him to be (one who fixes circumstances, removes discomfort, or aligns with your plans)?

What might it look like for you to trust Jesus as King—not just when things go as expected, but when they don’t?

Jesus came to deal with sin and bring transformation from the inside out. Where might He be inviting you to let Him “reorder” or cleanse something in your life?

This week, what is one practical way you can respond—not just by celebrating Jesus, but by following Him more intentionally?