

Palm Sunday to Easter: A 5-Day Journey of Surrender

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Day 1: When Expectations Meet Reality

Reading: Matthew 21:1-11; Zechariah 9:9

Devotional: The crowds expected a warrior king riding a war horse to overthrow Rome. Instead, Jesus arrived on a donkey and that showed someone being humble, peaceful, intentional. This wasn't a mistake; it was prophecy fulfilled. For 700 years, God's people had read Zechariah's words, and now the promise was unfolding differently than imagined.

How often do we approach God with our own script? We pray for specific outcomes, demand answers, and grow disappointed when God moves differently. But what if His "different" is better? The crowd wanted relief from Rome; Jesus came to defeat something far more dangerous than anything and that was sin itself.

Today, examine your expectations of God. Are you asking Him to meet your agenda, or are you surrendering to His greater plan? True faith trusts not just in God's power, but in His wisdom even when it doesn't match what you envisioned.

Day 2: The King You Need, Not the King You Want

Reading: John 6:15; John 18:36; Philippians 2:5-8

Devotional: Jesus withdrew when crowds tried to force Him into kingship on their terms. He understood something they didn't: the real battle wasn't political. It was spiritual. "My kingdom is not of this world," He declared. The problem wasn't Rome; it was the human heart enslaved to sin.

We make the same mistake. We want Jesus to fix our circumstances while He's working to transform our character. We pray for comfort; He offers surgery. We ask for easier paths; He invites us to deeper trust. Like a patient demanding a painkiller when they need an operation, we often resist the very intervention that will truly heal us.

The King God sent is righteous, victorious, and humble and that is a combination the world cannot comprehend. He didn't come to take life but to give His own. This is the King we need, even when He's not the King we want.

Day 3: The Cost of Following

Reading: Luke 9:23; Mark 8:34-38; Romans 12:1-2

Devotional: "Hosanna!" they shouted on Sunday. "Crucify Him!" they screamed by Friday. The same voices. The same crowd. What changed? Jesus didn't meet their expectations, so their allegiance evaporated.

Following Jesus is easy when He's blessing you, healing you, providing for you. But what happens when He leads you into uncertainty? When prayers go unanswered? When His path isn't making sense? That's when true discipleship is revealed.

Jesus said it plainly: "Deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow me." Not occasionally. Not when convenient. Daily. This isn't about religious activity; it's about complete surrender. You cannot crown Him King while clutching control of your life. You cannot worship Him on Sunday and live for yourself Monday through Saturday.

Real loyalty isn't proven in the parade. It is proven in the pressure. The question isn't whether you'll celebrate Jesus when everything is good, but whether you'll trust Him when nothing makes sense.

Day 4: From Palm Branches to the Cross

Reading: Matthew 27:15-26; Isaiah 53:3-7; 1 Peter 2:21-25

Devotional: They laid palm branches before Him. Days later, they laid a cross upon Him. The journey from celebration to crucifixion was shockingly swift, yet divinely ordained. Every step Jesus took toward Jerusalem, He took toward Calvary in a willingly, obediently, lovingly way.

Isaiah prophesied it: "He was despised and rejected... a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief." Jesus knew the fickleness of the crowd, yet He came anyway. He knew the betrayal, the abandonment, the agony—and still He rode that donkey into the city.

Why? Because the cross was never Plan B. It was always the plan. The crown couldn't come without the cross. Victory couldn't come without sacrifice. Resurrection couldn't come without death. Jesus didn't avoid suffering; He embraced it and all for you.

This is the heart of the Gospel: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Not because we deserved it. Not because we earned it. But because He loved us beyond measure.

Day 5: The Empty Tomb Changes Everything

Reading: Matthew 28:1-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 17-20

Devotional: The story doesn't end with a donkey. It doesn't end with palm branches. It doesn't even end with the cross. It ends with an empty tomb which is what changes absolutely everything.

Without the resurrection, Palm Sunday is just a parade. The cross is just a tragedy. Faith is just wishful thinking. But because Jesus rose from the dead, every promise is validated, every prophecy fulfilled, every hope secured. Death has been defeated. Sin has lost its power. The grave is empty.

Paul writes, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile." But He has been raised! The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to you today with power to overcome, to transform, to resurrect dead dreams and broken hearts.

Easter isn't just about what happened 2,000 years ago; it's about what's possible right now. Because He lives, you can face tomorrow. Because He conquered death, you can conquer fear. Because He rose, you can rise.

The King who rode humbly into Jerusalem now reigns victoriously in heaven and He is inviting you to live in that victory today.