

**A King in a Buick**  
Growth Group Discussion Guide  
John 12:12-16

**Intro questions**

- Share a favorite sports team or entertainer. What draws you to cheer for that team, group, or person?
- Sunday's sermon started with the assertion that we humans like to be affiliated with "winners." Why does this tend to be the case?
- Take a moment to pray, asking for God's Spirit to lead your discussion.

**1. Read John 12:12-16, then discuss.**

- What is the most festive atmosphere you have ever been in—a la New Year's Eve at Times Square, a Super Bowl victory parade, etc.? Such was the atmosphere around Jerusalem on the Sunday before Passover.
- Unpack the significance of each specific term or phrase used by the crowd (v. 13) in praising Jesus. (See below). Be sure to have a look at Psalm 118, as these terms allude to that Psalm.
  - *Hosanna.*
  - *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*
  - *Blessed is the King of Israel.*
- On the whole, what are the crowds saying about Jesus?
- What is the significance of the *palm branches* that people bring to this parade? (Have someone in your group re-hash the background, which Pastor Josh shared in the sermon).
- Why do you think the people had pinned their hopes for deliverance on Jesus?
  - What were they hoping he would do?
- Pastor Josh pointed out that Jesus did not turn down or quiet any of these acclamations. Why not? What is the significance of the fact that he allowed the people to praise him in this way?
- Jesus is acknowledging that he is the rightful King of his people. Being a king implies having authority. How do you feel about Jesus' claim to have authority over your life? Do you think that you have gladly submitted to this authority?

**2. Read Zechariah 9:9-10.**

- What was the essence of Zechariah's prophecy, some 500 years before the birth of Jesus?
- To what degree do you think that Jesus had this prophecy in mind when he chose to ride a donkey, instead of horse or another animal? (See John 12:14-15).
- What is the significance of Jesus' choice to ride a donkey?
- Pastor Josh argued on Sunday that while Jesus was/is undoubtedly King, he is a different kind of king than the Jewish crowds wanted or expected. He came to conquer by dying, rather than by force. This fact explains why so many people in the crowd had turned against Jesus within five days' time.
- Has there ever been a time in your life when God or Jesus didn't do what you wanted him to do? Please share.
- To what degree do you feel tempted to turn away from Jesus when he doesn't come through as you had hoped?

**3. Application** (spend more time on the questions that seem more pertinent to your group)

- One reason that Jesus didn't lead a revolution against Rome, according to Sunday's sermon, was that Rome was not the greatest oppressor of God's people. Likewise, no external "enemy" is our greatest source of oppression today. To what degree do you feel this inner "oppression" of sin?
- In terms of our experience, why is it so vital for us to understand and believe that Jesus is a different kind of king, who conquered by dying? How will this perspective make a difference in the daily events of our lives?
- What are some examples of ways that you see people attaching Jesus' name to their personal agenda? Or, if you're courageous, where do you see your own tendency to do this?
  - What does the Triumphal Entry have to say to us about these specific things?
- How does Jesus, the donkey-riding king, enable us to associate with "losers?" Why (or why not) is this an important outworking of Jesus' approach on Palm Sunday and Good Friday?

**4. Prayer**

- Spend some time confessing the things that came out above, and receiving forgiveness where needed.
- Praise Jesus as our King!
- Share and pray for other needs that may exist among your group members.