



The Triumphal Entry of Jesus

Text: Matthew 21:1-15

Series Overview: “Dead man walking.” It’s a phrase that has been used over the years to describe a person who has committed a capital offense walking to their impending death. Of course, the person is not literally dead (in contrast to your favorite zombie movie, dead people can’t actually walk), but the death the criminal is facing is so imminent, so certain, so real that it looms over every step they take toward their execution.

“Dead man walking” is a poignant way to describe the incarnate life and ministry of Jesus. His death was so imminent, so certain, so real that it loomed over every step he took toward Jerusalem and the cross. As the time drew closer, Jesus spoke about it with his disciples.

Overview: As Jesus entered Jerusalem, he did not look like someone on the way to a cross. Cheering crowds surrounded him. Shouts of “Hosanna” filled the air. A pathway of palm branches and cloaks was formed for him to travel on. It was a king’s reception and Jesus was the King. But the crowds were not cheering for a king who had come to lay down his life. They were cheering for a king who would set them free from the oppressive rule of Rome. They were cheering for a king who would help them live out their vision for the future. But Jesus had come to provide a different kind of freedom. He had come to secure a future that they could not have possibly imagined.

Sometimes, we are like the cheering crowds. We have our agenda, our vision, our hope for the future and we want Jesus to help make all of those things come true. But following Jesus involves being willing to lay all of that down. The palm branches that we place at Jesus’ feet need to be our own hopes and dreams. We must lay them down. Surrender them. Allow Jesus to possess them. And to possess us. Whatever we give him, Jesus will redeem it, sanctify it and transform it into something we could not have envisioned, even in our wildest dreams..

Resources: Check out <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/matthew/> for more information on the book of Matthew.

WELCOME

DISCUSSION



A. Getting Warmed Up

- Was Holy Week (including Palm Sunday and Easter) celebrated in your home growing up? If so, how did you celebrate? Do you carry on some of the some traditions today?

B. Digging In

- Read aloud Matthew 21:1-15
- What was the expectation of the crowd in light of how Jesus was coming into Jerusalem? (Think about the donkey/colt, the waving of branches, the crowd shouting.)
- Jesus never does something just to do it. There is always purpose in it. Why did Jesus participate in the procession?

C. Bringing It Home

- Read aloud John 12:19-21
- Kyle spoke of the power structures in this event. How did the Jewish ruling elite (priests and elders) hold power? How did the government leaders (Caesar, Pilate and Herod) hold power?
- Jesus was very aware that no one understood what was happening as he entered the city. How did Jesus hold the power he had?
- "This powerless Jewish carpenter from Galilee would change the course of history forever," said Pastor Tim Keller. "Jesus is the only person I've known who is unbelievably humble but not modest." Jesus is coming by losing power and dying. He's going to triumph through weakness. Why does he choose to do triumph in this way?
- Kyle said that the triumphal entry into Jerusalem is an incredible event that shows us what we think we need and what God has provided. In other words, God always gives us what we would have asked for if we knew everything he does. Does this truth change how you approach power? At work? In relationships? Marriage? Friendship? Loving your neighbor?

CLOSING PRAYER: We are confronted with two ways to live in these passages. We can be lead by the way the world sees power or the way that Jesus sees power. How can we pray for each other tonight in light of this?

Talk about this...

- INVITING: Who are you planning on inviting to the Easter Services? Can the group pray for these folks by name?
- IF YOU TAKE A BREAK: The study guides will still be available and posted on the Fairfax Community Church sermon web page through the whole "Dead Man Walking" series. Even if your group chooses to take a break between quarters, we encourage you to download the study guides and do them on your own.



- NEXT WEEK: THERE IS NO STUDY GUIDE for the Easter services. If you have new members joining your group, spend the time acclimating them to the group. OR you can spend the time enjoying the warm weather and having some time outside to have dessert and catch up.
- NEXT UP: The next sermon series "I Don't Want To Be Here," is about Paul's letters from prison. Following his most heartfelt letters, we will see what he believed was most needed for those in Christ to center their lives around.

