
PALM SUNDAY

A DIFFERENT MESSIAH

Today we celebrate the day called “Palm Sunday” – the day of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem one week prior to His crucifixion and death.

What can we learn from this incredible stage of Jesus’ life, only six days prior to His **death? (Mark 11:1-11)**

Setting the Scene

Spring time in Jerusalem

The time of the great Passover feast – hundreds of thousands of pilgrims on the roads to Jerusalem.

Jesus and His disciples travel from Jericho to Jerusalem via Bethany.

Choosing a Ride (Mark 11:1-6)

The first part of the story deals with the disciples getting a colt for Jesus to ride into the city.

Jesus’ choice of a donkey is deliberate and significant.

Jesus is not the unlucky victim of events which are spinning out of control; rather He remains the sovereign master of His fate as He chooses to go to the cross.

Riding Into Jerusalem

Jesus is deliberately and provocatively claiming to be the promised king of Israel who will re-establish the throne of David. The triumphal entry shows us Jesus knows He's the Messiah and that He identified Himself with the Shepherd-King predicted by Zechariah. (Zechariah 9:9-10)

The crowd goes crazy (Mark 11:9-10) – the Messiah has arrived.

Jesus does nothing! (Mark 11:11) What kind of a Messiah was this? What sort of a deliverer is this? Who needs a king like this?

Surrendered to the Father

The crucifixion of Jesus was not an accident that took Jesus by surprise while visiting Jerusalem. Jesus understood and embraced His calling and willingly obeyed the will of God, even to the point of death. In fact He deliberately provoked the events that would lead to the cross.

Jesus demonstrated His Lordship – but it also shows His servant heart and His obedience to the Father.

No one but Jesus understood that the completion of His mission was for Him to take on all our sin in the ultimate act of servanthood and sacrifice and apparent failure on a bloodstained cross. (Philippians 2:8)

What's your response to Jesus' act of obedient love? Have you accepted Him as your Messiah, the King of your life?

What of His example to submit to the Father's will? Is your life also one of submission and obedience to the Father despite the pull of the world or the plaudits and exultation of others?

A Better Messiah

Jesus doesn't always meet our expectations.

Jesus is Lord. He's under no obligation to live up to our expectations. So many of us seem to think that if Christ doesn't fit our expectations, then we'll just reject Him, as the crowds in Jerusalem did. But Christ is Lord, and he doesn't have to fit our expectations of Him.

Jesus, however, is a better Messiah.

We must not be like the people in Jerusalem, who hailed Christ as their king, just so long as He fit their image of what a king should be. Let us rather acknowledge Him truly as our King, our Lord, our Sovereign and walk in faith believing that He's a better Messiah.

He may not meet our expectations of how and when His will in our lives is done – but in faith we know, and in time we will come to understand, that He's Lord, He's in control and He's good.

Discussion Questions

1. What is something new you learned about Palm Sunday from the message on Sunday?
2. How does it make you feel to know Jesus was so determined to go to the cross?
3. What's your response to Jesus' act of obedient love? Have you accepted Him as your Messiah, the King of your life?
4. What of His example to submit to the Father's will? Is your life also one of submission and obedience to the Father despite the pull of the world or the plaudits and exultation of others?
5. What has been your response when Jesus hasn't met your expectations?
6. How in the future will you adjust to the fact that Jesus is a 'better Messiah'?
7. Pray together about the week ahead and reflect upon the sacrifice of Christ, His Lordship and love for you.