

Palm Sunday
The Path to Execution and Exaltation

John 12:12-26
Sunday, April 5, 2020

Introduction

In the midst of all that we have been going through the week of Easter brings both disappointment and great expectation. Disappointment because we won't have the chance to gather in person, but great expectation of how a week of thinking very intentionally and very purposefully about the work of Jesus can bring us hope, joy and peace.

As we consider the years of Jesus's public ministry it is easy to see that there were two distinct groups that formed. There were those who hoped in Jesus as the Messiah and those who grew to hate Him and sought to kill Him. There were those who want to exalt Him and there were those who want to execute Him.

During the ministry of Jesus we have seen Him pull away from both of these groups. When the crowds were ready to make Him king, He hid; and when the crowds sought to arrest Him, He escaped.

But in John 12, as the time of His death is approaching Jesus presents Himself to both of these groups in a very public way. He enters Jerusalem and presents Himself as the one who will be exalted and as the one who is to be executed.

Context

As the time of the Passover is approaching Jews from all over are gathering in Jerusalem. As the crowds fill the city people began to speculate about whether or not Jesus will come. Some hope to see Him because they are in awe of Him, others hope to see Him so they can arrest Him.

Two Things Jesus Declares Through His Entrance Into Jerusalem

I Will Be Exalted: When Jesus enters Jerusalem He is presenting Himself as the coming King (12:12-19)

- **The crowd that welcomes Jesus** – As Jesus enters Jerusalem He is greeted by a crowd that is declaring Him to be king. They waive palm branches, a customary greeting for a victorious conqueror and they cry or sing "Hosanna" which means "Save Us."
- **Jesus's reception of their greeting** – As the crowd exalts Jesus He does not pull away and He doesn't quiet them. In fact, He calls for a donkey thereby fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

- The crowds were right to exalt Jesus as the coming king, but they misunderstood the way His kingdom would be established. His coronation could only come through His crucifixion.

I Will Be Executed: When Jesus enters Jerusalem He is offering Himself to those who are prepared to kill Him (12:20-26)

- While on the one hand Jesus enters Jerusalem as a coming King, this event simultaneously puts into motion the plans for His death, and Jesus knew this was the case. He knew that there were those in Jerusalem who wanted Him dead and that this entrance into town would only intensify their desires.
- After Jesus enters Jerusalem He is approached by group of believing Greeks. This is a great reminder that Jesus came to be the king, not only of Jews, but of all who believe. (John 10:16; Romans 1:16)
- **My Hour has Come** – Throughout the Gospel of John Jesus has repeatedly stated that His hour had not yet come (John 2:4, 7:8, 7:30, 8:20). He was protected from His opponents because His hour/time had not yet arrived, but now we see a shift – the time has come for the Son to be glorified.
- **A Harvest Comes Through Death** – Jesus acknowledges that there is only one way for His plan to be accomplished. Just as a seed must die to bear fruit, Jesus must die to produce the fruit of eternal life.

Following the Example of the King (12:25-26)

Jesus makes it clear that just as He died, those who follow Him will have to give their lives also. He has set the example:

- We have to value eternal life more than physical life (12:25; Mark 8:34-36; Philippians 3:7-8)
- To serve Jesus is to follow in His footsteps (12:26; Matthew 10:24-25)

Three Reminders From Palm Sunday:

- Palm Sunday is a reminder that Jesus came so that He could establish His kingdom and rule as the eternal king.
- Palm Sunday is a reminder that Jesus went to the cross willingly. Jesus went to Jerusalem knowing that His time had come and He was willing to give Himself as a sacrifice for us.
- Palm Sunday is a reminder of our call to follow Him. Just as Jesus laid down His life we are called to give our lives in service to Him.