



CHRISTIAN CRUSADERS

7401 UNIVERSITY AVE., CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613
(319) 277-0924

INFO@CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG
WWW.CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG

A Day of Praise

April 13, 2025

Pr. Tim Boettger

John 12:12-19 (ESV)

The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

"Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"

His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Some 20 years ago, I took my son to his first professional football game. I hadn't been to one for quite some time either. I had been to one when I was younger, down in Kansas City, Missouri, and things had changed a lot since then. A lot more money has flown into the football arena since then, and we headed up to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to watch the Vikings play.

And I wasn't prepared for what we encountered. We had to park about 12 blocks away from the arena, and then we got out and had breakfast. I started to notice all the different kinds of attire that people were

wearing at the breakfast in this restaurant, some 10 or 12 blocks away from the arena. Everybody was dressed in purple, had their hair done differently, unique kinds of outfits with face painting and all this kind of stuff.

And then after breakfast, as we approached the arena, the costumes, the music, the tailgating, the energy outside of the arena just was overwhelming to me. Shocking to me. The television doesn't do it justice. And then, when we walked into the stadium, I just couldn't believe the enormity of it all, the passion in there. And then, of course, as game time approached and we started to move towards the triumphal entry of the team, the music started to play. The smoke came out. There was fire shooting out of things.

And it was what you might call a spiritual experience, as praise erupted forth as the players for the Minnesota Vikings, one by one, were announced and entered the arena. It was truly kind of a spiritual, worshipful experience.

Today we're talking about Palm Sunday and another time when praise broke forth. But it wasn't in a football arena. It wasn't even in an arena at all. It was out of doors, on a dusty trail entering into Jerusalem, and it was just one man.

As we enter Holy Week, this time when Christians around the world celebrate the coming of Jesus into Jerusalem, and then his movement towards the cross and the giving of his life on that cross, and then his resurrection, we're coming to a time when we can learn at an accelerated pace about our humanity and about Jesus' deity—the nature of human beings and the nature of Almighty God.

As Jesus is entering Jerusalem, we see this praise break forth from the Jewish people. They were gathered all around, and the Scripture says they had heard about this Jesus. Our text says that the crowd that had been with him, Jesus, when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to bear witness to this reality—that they had seen this resurrection from the dead.

And the reason the crowd went to meet him on this day, on Palm Sunday, was that they had heard he had done this sign.

So when this crowd, who was gathered for the feast in Jerusalem, heard that this Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took these palm branches off of trees and they went out to meet him. And the Scripture says, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

Now, this is a reference to Psalm 118, a psalm that the Israelites would sing when their king would return from a victorious battle on a great horse, and they would proclaim victory and praise the king for his divine protection and his care for them.

But at this time in Israel's history, they had no king. They had been conquered by the great Roman Empire, and they were ruled by Julius Caesar and King Herod. Many of them felt oppressed by Rome, by the tax collectors, by the burdens that Rome put upon them. And so they were hoping. They were longing for. They were waiting on the prophecy of a Redeemer. A Savior of their nation. Of themselves.

And so, when Jesus was coming, they're wondering, is this the man? Could he be the one? And so they break forth in praise.

This teaches us something about humanity, friends. It teaches us that when we're in a place where we're oppressed, a place that we don't like, we long to be brought out of it. We long to be rescued. We long to be saved. We long to have a strong deliverer come our way. So much so that sometimes we will see what we want to see. We'll miss some of the reality around us.

And that's what's happening here. These people are longing for that Redeemer. They're anxious for the one who will come and pull them out of this pit that they're in under the enslavement of the Roman Empire.

Now, not all of the Jews felt this way, but many of them did. There were some who were content in the position they had—we'll look at them here in a minute. But these individuals, longing for a king, grabbed palm trees, went out, and started to praise this man coming into their city.

"Hosanna," they said. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

Jesus was a rabbi at this point, but they had great hopes. They had great anticipation of what this man could do based on what they heard. But they missed something.

See what it says in the text? "Here is Jesus, found a young donkey and sat on it, just as written: 'Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.'"

Here, Jesus was testifying to the fact that he wasn't an earthly king that was wielding earthly power—in that sense, political power.

He was a king from another kingdom, a kingdom not of this world. But the people couldn't see that. All they were looking for was a political ruler, a king that would free them from the oppression of Rome. But Jesus was there to do far more than that. He was there to free them from eternal enslavement to sin and to invite them into the eternal kingdom of God.

But they didn't get this. They were just praising him because they had great hopes of being released from this current circumstance that they were in.

But that's not all that was happening here. Human beings, when we're oppressed, we want relief. But when we're in a good space, well, we want to stay in that space. We don't want our status quo messed with. And that was the Pharisees.

The Scripture says, the Pharisees said to one another, the whole world is going at him. There's nothing we can do. They felt threatened by Jesus because the religious leaders had a place with Rome of keeping the peace, and they were rewarded for it because they kept order to the Jewish people that Rome ruled over.

And so they really didn't want their cheese moved. They didn't want their lifestyle changed. And so we learn both of these things about humanity: when we're oppressed, we want relief; when we're in a good space, we want to stay there.

But as this week unfolds, we learn more about human nature. Not only do these two things hold true, but it also holds true that when we don't get what we want, we get disappointed. We're often very fickle in our nature. Even sometimes, we'll resort to evil.

That's what happens in this week. Those that were worshiping him just disappeared. It's hard to know where they went. This great crowd that was thinking about Jesus as their king—we don't really hear from them again much in the whole week as Jesus is arrested and taken before Pilate.

And then there are crowds of Jewish people saying not "have him be our King," but "he is a disgrace before our king Caesar," and they want him crucified. We don't know how many from each group were at both locations. But here's what happened in the city: the great fans of Jesus disappeared.

I can tell you this—when I was at that Vikings game with my son, the Vikings didn't play very well, and those fans went from being loud and exuberant to being angry and booing, and then to leaving. Leaving before the game was over. The place started to clear out in disgust of the players whom they were praising just before.

Human beings are fickle in nature. Not only did the Jewish people not get what they thought they wanted on this Palm Sunday by the end of the week, but the religious leaders who felt so threatened by Jesus also were feeling that their life was being disrupted.

So they decided to get rid of the threat. They were the ones instilling the idea of having Jesus done away with, having Jesus crucified.

John tells us that Pilate actually wanted to release Jesus after the religious leaders had him arrested, but the Jews cried out, if you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. King Caesar. Everyone who makes themselves a king, they said—now they're accusing Jesus of making himself a king—they oppose Caesar.

So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat him down. And then he judged him from the judgment seat, the stone pavement, it's called. And it was about noon on Friday. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your king."

And they cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!"

Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?"

And the chief priest, the insiders here, said, "We have no king but Caesar."

So Pilate delivered Jesus over to be crucified. The soldiers took charge of him. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the skull, called Golgotha, and there they crucified him.

Human beings—fickle in nature. Longing to have our lives changed when we're in hard spaces, and then also not wanting our lives messed with when we're in a good space, and then becoming fickle when any of these things might not happen the way we want them to.

In the middle of all this, friends, there's Jesus. This, what the Scripture says, anchor for our soul—firm and secure, unwavering, unchanging, beholden to no man's expectation.

This is the great I Am, who's coming into Jerusalem.

We learn about God as we watch the Easter story unfold. We learn about his intentionality, his desire not to please human beings in their sinful nature, but to do what is best for human beings in his great love for them.

So Jesus, unwavering by the effect of the Jews wanting him to be their political king, unwavering by the religious leaders and the Pharisees wanting him crucified, he himself went there to die as the payment, as an atonement for your sins and mine.

This is God—unhindered by human opinion, fulfilling his plan in human history, displaying his love for sinners, in that while we were yet kicking against him, disappointed, ill-perceiving of him, even angry at him, he dies for us to pay for the very sins which we commit against him.

This is the great I Am, the sovereign King of all, and we can take great comfort in the fact that in the midst of our fickleness, our frail humanity, our perceptions of who he is, and our sense of being defensive or threatened by change in our lives—in the middle of all this, God Himself is working out a good and perfect plan for humanity, for us as individuals, in his great love.

God Himself is unhindered in His purpose and His plan in displaying love for us—not what necessarily we always want, but doing what is best for us and what gives Him glory.

Jesus, the unhindered King who came into the world to open up the door to eternity with God for all of us, who humbled Himself, took on the very nature of a servant, was found in human likeness, and then gave His life as a ransom payment for you and for me.

And what does this simply point to? The fact that He is worthy of our worship. He is worthy of our praise. He is worthy of our honor. He is worthy of glory.

The Apostle Paul writes in Philippians chapter two that because Jesus was faithful and humble and went to the cross, God Himself has exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus now every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

He is seated at the right hand of God in heaven. John was caught up and saw a picture of this, recorded for us in Revelations chapter four, when he says this:

The one who sat there on the throne had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow resembling an emerald encircles the throne. Surrounding the throne, there's 24 other thrones, and seated on them are 24 elders. They're dressed in white, and there's crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne come flashes of lightning, rumblings of peals of thunder.

Before the throne, seven lamps are blazing. And in the center, around the throne, there's four living creatures, and they're covered with eyes in the front and the back. And the first living creature is like a lion. The second's like an ox. The third, like the face of a man. The fourth, like a flying eagle.

Each of these four living creatures has six wings and is covered with eyes all around, even under the wings. And day and night they never stop saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

And whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne—this is Jesus—and who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and they worship Him, who lives forever and ever.

They lay their crowns before the throne and say, "You are worthy, O Lord God, to receive glory, honor, and power. For You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being."

Friends, as we're heading into Easter, can I invite you to become a worshiper of God? At whatever level you are, could you invite God to call you into more praise for who He is and what He's done?

Just as Psalm 100 says: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God. It is He who made us. We are His people. We are the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving. Enter His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him. Bless His name. For the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.

Father, we thank You for Your word. We thank You on this Palm Sunday for the coming of Your Son, for Your sending Him into the world to do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. Call forth praise in our hearts. Appropriate worship of You, for we value You. Help us value You above all things.

May You be the focus of our worship and praise as we head through this week. Stir this in us by the power of Your Spirit and the resurrection power of Jesus. We pray it in His matchless name. Amen.