



Discussion Guide

For the week of March 29, 2026
Palm Sunday 2026 | John 12:1-15

Miss this week's teaching? You can watch it at <https://youtu.be/rkA-glhQNXE>

Summary

This Palm Sunday, Pastor Jim explores the historical context of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, contrasting it with the Jewish expectation of a political deliverer like Judas Maccabeus who had freed them from Syrian oppression 200 years earlier. He explains how the crowds had hope for political liberation from Roman rule, but Jesus came for a far greater purpose - to save the world from sin through His death on the cross. The message challenges us to examine our expectations of Jesus, warning against treating Him like a genie who grants wishes rather than recognizing Him as the Savior who has already provided our greatest need: forgiveness and eternal life. He emphasizes that Jesus' finished work on the cross is sufficient, and we should find contentment in what Christ has already accomplished rather than demanding additional blessings.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today to study Your Word, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to receive what You want to teach us. Help us to set aside our own expectations and agendas, and instead be receptive to Your truth. Lord, we pray that through our discussion today, You would deepen our understanding of who Jesus is and what He has accomplished for us. May we leave here with a greater appreciation for the finished work of Christ and a renewed sense of gratitude for Your amazing grace. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

If you could have a parade thrown in your honor, what would you want people to celebrate about you?

Key Verses

- John 12:1-19
- Zechariah 9:9
- John 19:16

Questions

- What do you think the crowd was expecting when they saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey?
- How does understanding the historical context of Judas Maccabeus help us better understand the significance of the palm branches?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to ride on a donkey rather than a horse or walking into Jerusalem?



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- Pastor Jim mentions that people can go from shouting 'Hosanna' to 'Crucify Him' when Jesus doesn't meet their expectations. Have you ever experienced disappointment with God when He didn't answer a prayer the way you wanted?
- What are some ways we might treat Jesus like a 'genie in a bottle' rather than as our Savior and Lord?
- Pastor Jim says that Jesus came to save us from our greatest enemy - sin. Why is sin a greater threat than political oppression or physical enemies?
- How does focusing on what Jesus has already accomplished (forgiveness, salvation, eternal life) change our perspective on current struggles?
- What does it mean to you personally that Jesus knew you before the world began and still chose to die for you?

Life Application

This week, instead of focusing on what you want God to do for you, spend time each day reflecting on and thanking Him for what He has already done. Make a list of the spiritual blessings you have in Christ (forgiveness, salvation, eternal life, God's presence) and meditate on how these gifts are sufficient, regardless of your current circumstances.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus entered Jerusalem not as a political deliverer but as a spiritual Savior who came to die for the sins of the world
- The palm branches represented the people's expectation for political liberation, similar to their celebration of Judas Maccabeus almost 200 years earlier
- When we treat Jesus like a genie who should grant our wishes, we risk becoming disappointed and turning away from Him
- Jesus has already provided our greatest need - forgiveness of sin and eternal life - and this should be sufficient for our contentment
- God's sovereignty means He does what is best for us, even when we don't understand or like His decisions

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for this time of discussion and reflection on Your triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Help us to remember that You came not to meet our earthly expectations, but to provide what we needed most - salvation from sin and eternal life with You. As we go through this week leading up to Easter, may we keep our eyes fixed on the cross and the finished work You accomplished there. Help us to find our contentment and joy in what You have already done, rather than in what we hope You will do. Give us hearts of gratitude and help us to trust in Your sovereignty, knowing that You always do what is best for us. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.