

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to John 12

We are continuing our verse by verse study through the Gospel of John

Last Sunday morning we looked at the first 8 verses of the chapter.

And we saw the response of certain individuals to who Jesus is.

In our study this morning, we are going to see a bigger response as we continue to look at the last week in the life of Jesus before He goes to the cross.

Let's pray...

The Plot to Kill Lazarus

9 Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

We begin our study this morning with a great contrast between the group of people that we are introduced here in verse 9 – the Jews – the religious rulers of the time and three individuals who we see at the beginning of the chapter.

You see, when Jesus came to Bethany – he came to the house of Simon the leper (the other gospels tell us this). Jesus came as the guest of honor.

And we saw in our study last week that Martha, Lazarus and Mary worshipped Jesus there.

Martha worshipped Jesus by serving – that is what she did. She was a doer

Lazarus worshipped Jesus by being at His side –

And then we saw Mary of Bethany – she poured out a drink offering – it was a beautiful outpouring of love as she poured this costly perfume upon her Lord.

It was a complete selfless act.

It was Mary completely surrendering to His will / putting all her trust in Him

You see, these three individuals, they understood who Jesus is – they understood that He was God - and they worshipped Him

We also saw the heart of Judas – instead of worshipping Jesus – remember, he saw even more of the evidence that Mary, Martha and Lazarus ever saw – Judas chose to worship something else. His love was money -

He was not willing to surrender his will – he was not ready to pour out a drink offering like Mary of Bethany.

And now we see this group of Jews – this group of religious rulers.

They heard that Jesus was back in town – they heard what Jesus had done to Lazarus – that He had raised him from the dead.

However, notice that the religious rulers didn't come to Bethany to worship Jesus.

Many of them only came to see the show.

They heard about Lazarus – they came to see whether it was true or not that Lazarus had been brought back from the dead.

“Did this really happen?”

They saw the evidence and their response was apathy

They were spectators, but not worshippers.

They had no real interest in who Jesus is – so they weren't moved to worship

Turn your bibles to Psalm 5

Psalm 5 – a beautiful Psalm of David

Psalm 5:7 But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.

In his prayer, did David say because I have no trials, I will worship toward Your holy temple?

Did he say because You answered all my prayers in my time, I will worship toward Your holy temple?

Because I feel good today, I will worship...

No - David's worship wasn't based on his feelings, but on his reverence for a righteous, merciful God.

Church,

Are we spectators or are we worshippers?

Jesus doesn't call us to just simply point out what He has done (spectators) but to allow people to see who He is

What Jesus wants from us is the response that Mary had – unashamed and complete abandonment (that is true worship) – “whatever you want Jesus”

because that type of worship points to His infinite worth.

So, John tells us that some that came were indifferent – apathetic – they did not worship.

And then there was another group -

10 But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also,

A few weeks ago, as we were looking at John 11 – you might remember that Caiaphas “el guapo” after receiving word that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, he had a prophesy and he said, “It is better us that one man should die for the people”

And he was referring to Jesus

So now, we go from it being better for one person to die for the people – to it is better that two should die for the people.

Church,

Here we see the evolution of the thinking if the religious rulers – at first, they were using religion to justify their actions toward Jesus

He broke the Sabbath

He claimed to be God

They questioned His works

They questioned His authority

Now, their thought process has gone full evil

This complete and irrational behavior is a result from the sin and the hardening of hearts from denying the evidence that has been laid out before them.

Remember, they never argued against what Jesus did to Lazarus – the evidence was overwhelming – Lazarus is standing in front of them – and now, they have determined that they have to kill him too.

Church,

This is the spiral that sin takes us on

That is exactly what Paul tells us in Rom 1

Rom 1:20-21

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Paul says that since creation, we should clearly see who God is – the evidence is there – no excuses and as we reject the evidence – things just spiral down.

Things go from bad to worse

And that is the place where the religious rulers were

They had denied the evidence – and now, they are not only ready to kill Jesus, they are also set to kill Lazarus.

They are willing to do whatever it takes, not to find the Messiah but to preserve their way of life.

They wanted to preserve, what they wanted life to look like

It revealed the depravity of their hearts.

BTW, think of the error in their logic.

Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead

And here they want to kill Lazarus again – don't you think that someone would have gone up to Caiaphas and said, "Hey bro - What happens is Jesus raises him up again?"

Instead of seeking to kill Lazarus – they should have fallen on their knees and worshipped Jesus.

Church,

To not worship Jesus – is to set the stage for self-destruction – that is what we see here with the religious rulers.

11 because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

Here John provides for us the reason they wanted to kill Lazarus.

They were losing their followers; they were losing their status quo; they were losing their influence.

In the same that Judas saw money go down the drain – when Mary poured the oil on Jesus, the religious rulers see their influence slipping away as they see the people seeing the evidence and responding to the evidence by believing in Him.

But most importantly,

Jesus threatened their comfy place at the pinnacle of Jewish social life.

These religious rulers had heard enough of Jesus' teaching to know if they were to become His followers it would mean the end of the corruption that supported their office & funded their lavish lifestyles.

And that church, was not a change that they were willing to make.

You see,

This is precisely why people reject Jesus today.

It has nothing to do with evidence or the reasonableness of the Gospel.

In the end, people reject Jesus Christ because they don't want to change.

They love their sin more than God.

The Triumphal Entry

12 The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

So now we come to Palm Sunday

The feast that is spoken of here – as bible students, we know it refers to the Passover Feast

This was the Sunday before Passover which came at the end of the week.

The significance of this day is that the Book of Exodus tells us that this was the day that the family was to select the lamb for the Passover.

This is the day that they were to inspect it for blemishes or flaws

And it is on this day, that the Lamb of God makes His triumphant entry into Jerusalem for the very last time.

There were literally tens of thousands of pilgrims crowded into Jerusalem for the Feast, with people camped out all over the City.

This was one of the three feasts, where God's people were required to return to Jerusalem to celebrate and reflect on how God redeemed His people from bondage through the bloodshed of a spotless lamb.

So when John says there was a great multitude – guess what, there was a great multitude.

The Jewish historian - Josephus tells us that there were over 250k lambs that were to be offered that week.

And the rabbis had determined that each lamb was supposed to represent at least 10 people and no more than 20

Not only were they there to observe the feast

They were there because there was a buzz going around that Jesus was going to show up.

Later on in our text, we are going to see that that buzz came from many of the people that were there in Bethany

Those that were there mourning with Mary and Martha

Those that Jesus commanded to roll away the stone

Those who were able to smell stinky Lazarus

Those that saw him hop out of the tomb

Those that helped to peel away his grave clothes

Those that saw him having supper with Jesus

Those that saw the evidence and believed

They went ahead to Jerusalem to tell everyone that Jesus was showing up.

So they told the people, and the people responded by preparing the way for the King.

How did they prepare – John tells us.

13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’

The King of Israel!”

Now, John is the only one of the four gospel writers that mentions the type of branches that were laid down on the street to prepare for Jesus’ arrival.

They were palm branches.

Why Palm branches???

This goes back to the Maccabean revolt 200 years earlier.

Judas Maccabaeus led a rebellion against the oppressors. (The hannakuh story)

So from that time, the Jews adopted the palm branch as a symbol of victory and deliverance.

So, with the people seeing and hearing the evidence of everything that Jesus had done.

They looked to the scriptures and believed that their deliver had arrived –

The new Judas Maccabaeus that was going to deliver them from the oppression of Rome.

Turn with me to Psalm 118

[Psa 118:19-26 NKJV] 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, [And] I will praise the LORD. 20 This is the gate of the LORD, Through which the righteous shall enter. 21 I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation. 22 The stone [which] the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. 23 This was the LORD's doing; It [is] marvelous in our eyes. 24 This [is] the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. 25 **Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. 26 Blessed [is] he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.**

I asked you to make a note of the phrase, save now – because that is the word Hosanna!!!

That is what the people are crying out.

Their waving palm branches and reciting Psalm 118 -

‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ The King of Israel!”

Notice – they are declaring Jesus as the king of Israel – the one who possess the power to come and save them.

They are declaring that Jesus is the Messiah – who will set them free from Roman captivity.

They are ready to crown Him as king.

At one time, they wanted to take Jesus by force to make Him their king, but He got away from them, because it wasn't time yet (John 6:15).

But now, after having displayed such great power in raising Lazarus from the dead, the people are hoping that He's going to be their political deliverer.

And this time, Jesus doesn't stop them.

You see, It's time to save the people, but it's going to be by a different way.

Instead of wiping out the Romans, Jesus is going to wipe out a greater threat, the penalty of their sins.

14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

15 “Fear not, daughter of Zion;

Behold, your King is coming,

Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”

When we read Matthew and Mark's account – they provide the details how Jesus told them to go get the donkey that He had miraculously provided the provision for them to retrieve.

Luke's account tells us that Jesus stopped and wept before He entered Jerusalem

However, John skips over all the details

And the reason that he skips the details is because his main goal is to remind us of who Jesus is.

He is our King

He is the Messiah

And as He sits on the donkey – He is fulfilling the Messianic prophesy found in Zechariah.

So – the question is –

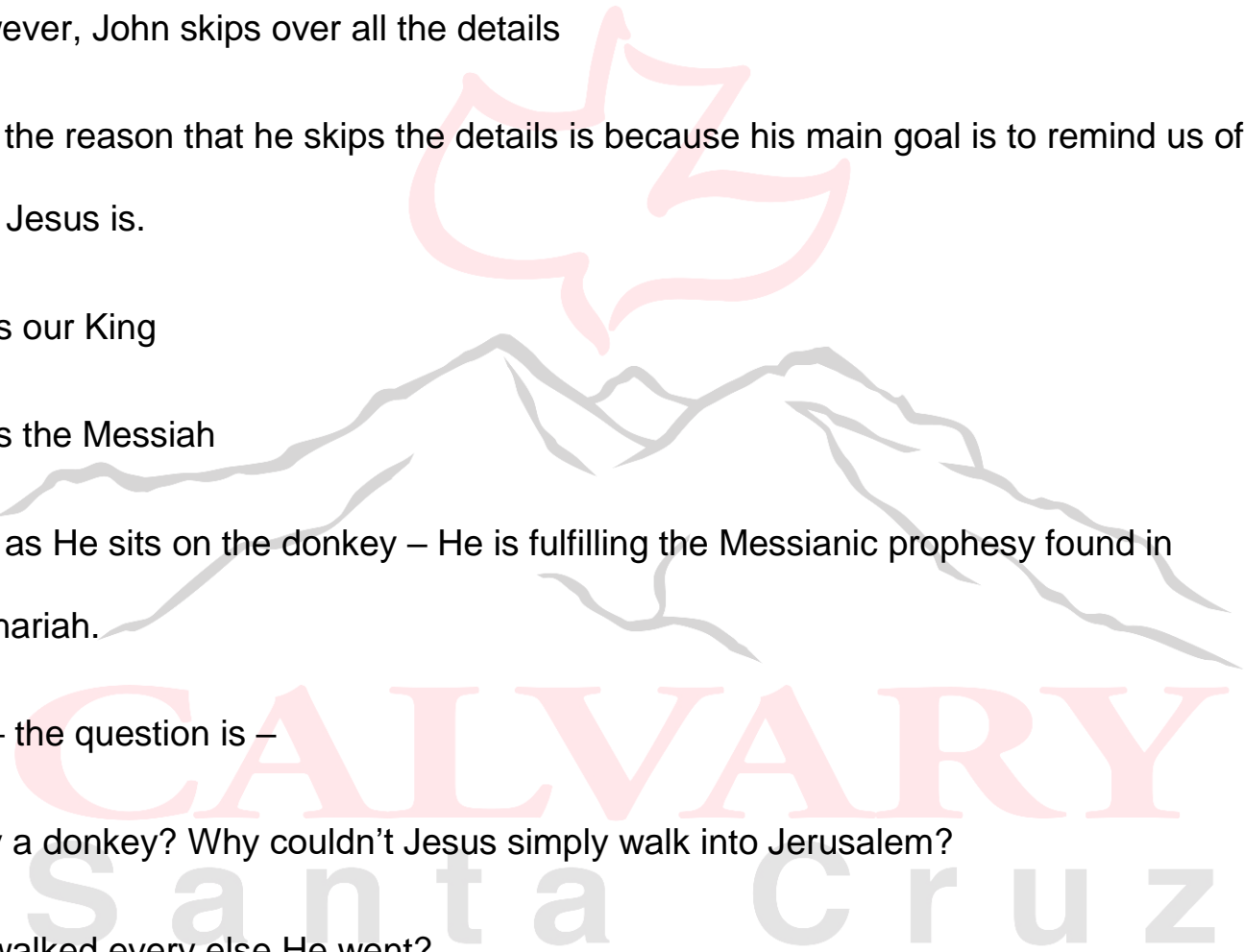
Why a donkey? Why couldn't Jesus simply walk into Jerusalem?

He walked every else He went?

He even walked on water.

Why not a horse - as it seems more fitting for a King?

The answer is simple:



The horse was an animal of war, not peace.

It was big, it was strong, it was fast

If a king rode a horse into town, he was either going to war or coming from war.

A donkey is the opposite of a horse

Not only did Jesus ride on a donkey – he rode on a young donkey

He intentionally sought out the most humble and peaceful arrival which communicates to us, ultimately His purpose in coming

Jesus is not entering in as an arrogant King that is going to rule over His people

He is entering in as a humble King who will serve His people by ultimately laying His life down on the cross.

Jesus riding on the donkey should have been the evidence to the religious rulers that He wasn't coming to wage war against Rome – remember, one of the reasons that they were wanted to kill Him was because they said that if He got too popular and rebelled against Rome, Rome would have come down on them.

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

When these things were taking place, the disciples were apparently oblivious to the implications of the events.

As they were following Jesus enter Jerusalem, they had no clue to what was going on.

Why was Jesus riding a donkey?

Why are the people quoting the Psalms?

Why is He doing it 4 days before the Passover?

It wasn't until Jesus was glorified.

Not just risen, but glorified.

That means not only rising from the grave, but ascending into heaven and being seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Now, the implication here is they only understood because of the work of the Holy Spirit

Remember the announcement that Jesus made during the Feast of Tabernacles –
John 7

[Jhn 7:38-39 NKJV] 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified.

But I wonder if there's more in this verse.

Something else stuck out in this verse to me.

The disciples didn't understand at first.

But when Jesus was glorified ...

I found two lessons for us

1. We may not always understand at first – just like the disciples

A big chunk of our life is lived like this – right.

We don't always understand what we're going through, nor do we realize all the implications of what is occurring.

Things don't make sense until we look back – and then we say, “this is why God allowed me to go through this trial. He was at work doing so and so.”

So we shouldn't worry if we don't fully understand our current circumstances.

2. Just let Jesus be glorified.

It was after Jesus was glorified that the disciples began to realize how things fit together.

Therefore, we need to take our eyes off of our circumstances and put them on Jesus.

Let Him be glorified in our life, and in all our circumstances!

Give Him glory by learning to praise Him for His goodness and faithfulness in all our circumstances.

Yes, even the hard ones!

17 Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. 18 For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

All of those who'd been at the tomb of Lazarus & seen the miracle of his raising were part of the crowd that followed Jesus from Bethany to Jerusalem.

As they went along, they were telling people about what they'd seen.

They talked About What They Had seen, they talked about What They Had Heard, they talked About Jesus Christ...

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"

The Pharisees had been telling people not to follow Jesus

They had been threatening them by telling them they would be thrown out of the synagogue for following Jesus (John 9:22)

They had put wanted posters at every circle k - asking the people to inform them of Jesus' whereabouts so He could be arrested. (John 11:57)

But now they're afraid that none of their efforts are working – so they begin to argue with one another.

“Whatever we are doing – it’s not working”

Church, the people are cheering Jesus

The Pharisees are arguing with each other – they think that all is lost.

But the thing to remember church, that it is only going to take 4 days for those same people that were cheering “Hosanna” to start chanting “crucify Him”

And the same Pharisees who thought they were defeated – thought they were victorious when Jesus was nailed to the cross.

Here is my point, I think many times, we watch the news and we see what is going on in the world today – or there is chaos in our personal lives and we begin to wonder where God is?

Church – do not despair.

Even when it looks like Jesus might be losing, Jesus always wins and He will find out a way to pull out a glorious victory in the end.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

