

Palm Sunday 2026

Fickle people? LeBron hailed as greatest to ever play; 2010 moved to Heat (hated -burned jersey); BUT, in 2016 at his return hailed as greatest ever -won 2016 NBA finals. Fickle fans (=what have you done for me lately)

Read John 12:9-35 -Peak of Jesus' ministry (Lazarus' resur): Huge crowds; glee; hope; "*worship*" *BUT...within six short days, the same crowd would yell 'Crucify Him' -they turned on Jesus. *reje*

Vs. 9: The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not on account of Jesus only, but so that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also, ¹¹ because *on account of him [Lazarus] many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus*. Lazarus was living proof, a man raised from death to life, that Jesus was God, the promised Messiah=*witness*

¹² On the next day, when the large crowd that had come to the [Passover] feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³ they took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and *began* shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, indeed, the King of Israel!" ¹⁴ Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: ¹⁵ "*Do not fear, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.*" ¹⁶ *These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things for Him.* ¹⁷ So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, *continued to testify about Him.* ¹⁸ For this reason also the [s]people went to meet Him, because they heard that **He had performed this [h]sign.** ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said [i]to one another, "You see that you are not accomplishing anything; look, *the world has gone after Him!*" [the peak of Christ's min./ thousands seeking to see Him; meet Him; seek after Him]

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; ²¹ these *people* then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and were making a request of him, saying, "**Sir, we wish to see Jesus.**" ²² Philip *came and *told Andrew *then* Andrew and Philip *came and *told Jesus. ²³ But Jesus *answered them by saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

-Christ's ultimate ministry had come: more than teaching, more than miracles, more than min., Jesus came to die -to save the world through His death, and that time had come.

*This is the message now to any who would follow Jesus (**amidst huge crowds/popularity**)....

V. 25 **The one who loves his life loses it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life.** The call to follow Jesus is radical. Kingdom Paradox. World doesn't get it

²⁶ **If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me;** Where is Jesus leading us? Comfort? Chaos? *Conflict* **and where I am, there My servant will be also;** Abiding; Presence; (Mt. 6:33; John 15)

if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. To surrender/serve the Lord =*eter. rewards.*

-People loved the **idea** of Jesus. People wanted Him to perform miracles for them. They wanted Him to liberate them from their difficult circumstance.

-Their relationship with Jesus was **transactional**.

=A quick faith: Easy Believism; follow the crowd; follow the popular movement.

=A **Convenient** faith, one that comforts me in my need & in my perspective what I think is best.

*A **committed** faith is *not* transactional; it is not self-centered; It is not about what promotes my lifestyle, my wants, my desires, my comfort. It is not what is easy, and a committed faith will cost me everything (on this earth: **reputation; friends; popularity; wealth; power; influence**)

=True fellowship will cost you everything. Because Jesus knows God is worth everything.

[Luke 9:22-26 ²² saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised on the third day.”

²³ And He was saying to *them* all, “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his ^[k]life will lose it, but whoever loses his ^[l]life for My sake, this is the one who will save it.²⁵ For what good does it do a person if he gains the whole world, but loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and *the glory of the Father and the holy angels.*] At the height of the spectacle, fame, rush to see Jesus... People had the wrong idea about what God wants for them – and WHO God provided for them. People had wrong expectations of Jesus-Do we??

Notice some takeaways from this passage on Palm Sunday:

1. The Resurrection Power of Jesus Provokes Both Faith and Opposition

The presence of **Lazarus**, whom Jesus raised from the dead, draws large crowds (John 12:9). Yet the miracle also intensifies hostility from the religious leaders.

The chief priests plot to kill Lazarus as well because his very existence testifies to Christ’s power. *God’s greatest works often produce **both belief and hostility**. The light of Christ exposes hearts.

2. Spiritual Life Comes Through Death

Jesus uses the metaphor of a grain of wheat: “**Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.**” Kingdom Paradox: **Death produces life**. This refers both to Christ’s death and the pattern of discipleship.

*God’s kingdom advances through **self-sacrifice**, not self-preservation.

3. Following Jesus Requires Radical Surrender

Jesus says: “**Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.**” This is a call to total allegiance.

*Discipleship means surrendering earthly security for eternal life.

4. The Cross Is the Defeat of Satan

Jesus says: “**Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.**” The crucifixion becomes the decisive judgment against evil. Kingdom Paradox: The cross is not defeat—it is **cosmic victory**.

5. By His death, Jesus Draws All People to Himself, to give them real life

Jesus declares: “**And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.**”

-Vs. 32: Jesus being “lifted up” refers to crucifixion, but also *exaltation* -will draw ALL people...

The Grain of Wheat In 2008, a massive grain vault was discovered in the ruins of **Masada**, the desert fortress where Jewish rebels once lived. Archaeologists found ancient seeds stored there for nearly 2,000 years.

Scientists planted one of the seeds. Amazingly—it sprouted.

No matter how long it existed ON the earth, it *had* to be **buried in the ground** before its life could emerge again.

= In Christ, through HIS death came **resurrection life for the world**.

***And Jesus invites every disciple to follow the same pattern: **life through surrender, glory through sacrifice**.

Community Group Discussion Questions

Palm Sunday

1. Why do you think the miracle involving Lazarus caused both belief and hostility among the people?
2. The crowd celebrated Jesus as King but later rejected Him. What does this reveal about the human heart? Our own hearts. In what ways do you reject the Lord weekly?
3. Why is it significant that Greeks came seeking Jesus in this passage?
4. Jesus says a grain of wheat must die to produce life. What does this teach about the nature of the gospel?
5. What does it mean practically to “*hate* your life in this world” in order to keep it for eternal life?
6. Jesus says the ruler of this world will be cast out through the cross. How does the cross represent victory rather than defeat?
7. In what areas of your life is Jesus calling you to die to yourself so that spiritual fruit can grow?