

Day 4: Understanding Jesus Through the Cross

Read and Reflect: John 12:16

Though the disciples did not understand these things at first, after Jesus was glorified the meaning of these events became clear to them. That is a crucial lesson for us. We do not understand Jesus rightly apart from His death, resurrection, and exaltation. Without the cross, Palm Sunday can be mistaken as a political parade, or Jesus can be seen merely as a moral teacher or inspirational leader. But through the cross, we see the full truth: He is the Lamb of God, the suffering Savior, the One who gave Himself for sinners.

We must learn to interpret everything about Jesus through Calvary. Therefore, how does the cross correct my misunderstandings about who Jesus is and what He came to do?

Day 5: The Savior We Need

Read and Reflect: John 12:17-19

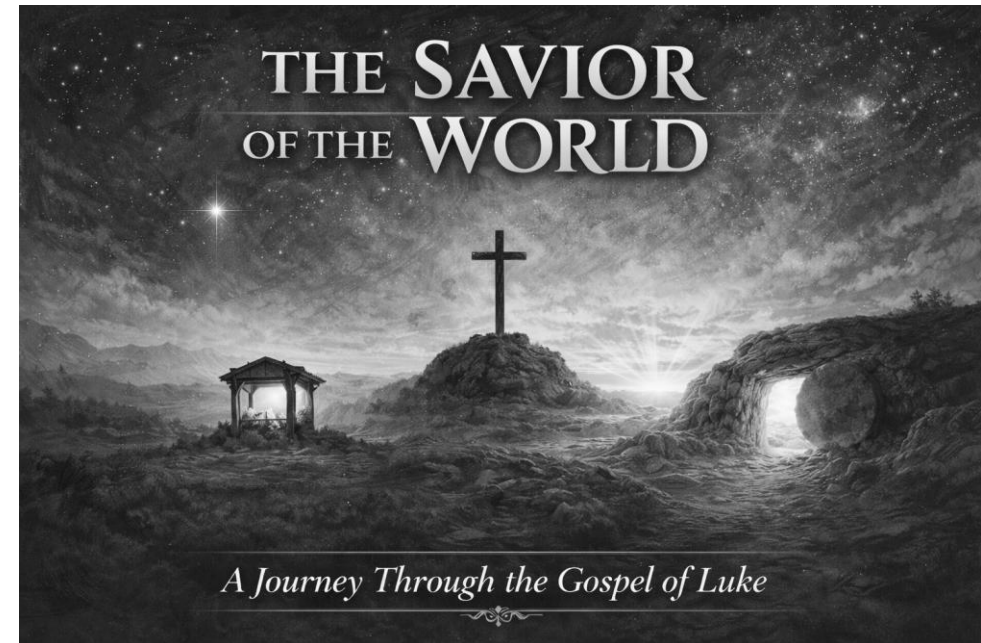
These verses communicate a deep irony: the Pharisees complain that “the whole world has gone after Him.” They mean this as a lament, but John means us to hear something bigger. Because Jesus will one day draw people from all nations to Himself.

Many who shouted “Hosanna” would soon shout “Crucify Him!” That’s because Jesus refused to be the King they wanted. We, too, must hear and heed this one fact: Jesus didn’t come to serve our agenda; He came to be the Savior we need.

Have I trusted Jesus only for what I want from Him, or for who He truly is?

Questions to Revisit through the Week

1. Am I drawn to Jesus only for what He can do for me?
2. Have I tried to reshape Jesus into the kind of King I prefer?
3. Do I welcome Him on His terms, or only on mine?
4. Am I praising Jesus with my lips while resisting His Lordship?



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THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD:
Welcoming a King, Rejecting a Savior
John 12:9-19

SERMON NOTES

A Private Dinner (vv. 9-11)

The Crowd's Fascination (v. 9)

- People gathered to see: Lazarus, the man who had been raised; and Jesus, the one who raised him.
- But fascination is not the same as faith. People may be impressed by Jesus without being surrendered to Jesus.

The Chief Priests' Plotting (v. 10-11)

- The leaders now want to kill both Jesus and Lazarus. Why? Because Lazarus is living proof that Jesus has power over death.
- The same evidence that softens some hearts can harden others.

A Public Demonstration (vv. 12-15)

The Crowd's Celebration (vv. 12-13)

- They waved palm branches, symbols of victory, national hope, and liberation. They shouted from Psalm 118.
- They were celebrating the right person, but the wrong kind of victory. They wanted rescue from Rome; Jesus came to rescue from sin.

Jesus' Declaration (vv. 14-15)

- Jesus rides in on a young donkey, which reveals: His humility, the peace He brings, the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, and His authority over the creation.
- In effect, Jesus says, "You are right to welcome Me. But you are wrong about why I have come."

Varied Reactions to Jesus (vv. 16-19)

The Disciples' Confusion (v. 16)

- The disciples did not fully understand until after Jesus was glorified. We must interpret everything about Jesus through the cross.

The Crowd's Testimony (vv. 17-18)

- Those who saw Lazarus raised kept telling others. Hearing about Jesus does not automatically mean believing in Jesus.

The Pharisees' Frustration (v. 19)

- They spoke with frustration and irony: "The whole world has gone after Him."
- The King they opposed is the King who will draw people from everywhere.

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Day 1: Fascinated, But Not Faithful

Read and Reflect: John 12:9

Those in Bethany came to see Jesus and Lazarus. They were curious. They were amazed. They wanted to witness something extraordinary. But John's Gospel repeatedly reminds us that amazement is not the same as faith. Many people are interested in Jesus, impressed by Jesus, or even emotionally stirred about Jesus without ever truly surrendering to Him.

What matters most is not whether Jesus interests us, but whether Jesus reigns over us. What is the difference between being impressed by Jesus and being submitted to Jesus?

Day 2: When Evidence Hardens the Heart

Read and Reflect: John 12:10-11

The chief priests, rather than receiving the evidence accepting the truth about Jesus, they double down in opposition to Jesus. Their problem wasn't lack of evidence; it was their love of control, influence, and resistance to the truth. Unbelief, then, is not mainly intellectual, but moral and spiritual.

The same truth that melts one person's heart may harden another's. Ask yourself, "Am I honestly open to the truth of Christ wherever it leads, or do I resist Him when His claims threaten my control?"

Day 3: The King on a Donkey

Read and Reflect: John 12:12-15

The crowd waved palm branches and shouted words from Psalm 118. They welcomed Jesus as a victorious king. Though He is indeed King, he is not the kind of king they expected. He didn't come to conquer political enemies, but to conquer sin, death, and the devil through His substitutional sacrifice.

In what ways am I tempted to want Jesus on my own terms instead of receiving Him as He truly is?