



## **Palm Sunday**

No disciple or spectator expected Palm Sunday to happen as it did. The disciples borrowed animals from someone they had never met without doubting Jesus' instructions. That same person loaned Jesus their animals without knowing anything other than their master needed them. The crowd saw Jesus as a triumphant king but would see him differently in just a few days. No one expected Palm Sunday, but we all needed it.

This week, we look at what the people at Palm Sunday expected, what they got, and how this blend of expected and unexpected plays out in our lives.



**Asbury**  
come. build. love.

**Begin** by praying for the group to expect God to move in unexpected ways.

*When they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus gave two disciples a task. He said to them, "Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter, you will find a donkey tied up and a colt with it. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that their master needs them." He sent them off right away. Now this happened to fulfill what the prophet said, Say to Daughter Zion, "Look, your king is coming to you, humble and riding on a donkey, and on a colt the donkey's offspring." The disciples went and did just as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the donkey and the colt and laid their clothes on them. Then he sat on them.*

*Now a large crowd spread their clothes on the road. Others cut palm branches off the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds in front of him and behind him shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And when Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up. "Who is this?" they asked. The crowds answered, "It's the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."*

*[Matthew 21:1-11]*

# The People

- What do you imagine the disciples felt as they followed Jesus' instruction to acquire a donkey and a colt from a stranger? How do you imagine the owner responded when the disciples explained that their master needed them?
- What possible symbolism lies behind the crowd laying cloaks and branches on the ground ahead of Jesus as he rode into the city?
- The crowd expected Jesus to govern Israel and rule like King David. Why do you think they identified him as "the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee"? What implications might this label imply for their understanding of Jesus' actions?
- The crowd shouted praises of Hosanna at Jesus. How is praising Jesus even more appropriate given that we know he defeated sin and death rather than the Roman Empire?

# Jesus

- Matthew tells us Jesus fulfilled prophecy when he rode the donkey and colt into Jerusalem. Do you think Jesus intentionally fulfilled this scripture?
- The crowd who welcomed Jesus had specific expectations of him, expectations that he would not fulfill. How do you think Jesus viewed the crowd in light of these expectations?

- Jesus' entry into Jerusalem began a hectic, earth-shaking week. What do you imagine his mindset was entering Jerusalem? How does his possible mindset compare with the crowd's enthusiasm?

## Us

- Think back 5, 10, or 20 years ago. How different is your life from what you expected it to be? How is it better? How is it worse? Where do you hope to be 5, 10, or 20 years from now?
- Do the unexpected. The disciples did not expect Jesus to ask them to borrow a donkey and colt, but they followed his instructions anyway. Scripture records no doubt or questioning by the owner of the donkey and colt when asked to give. When has God nudged you to do or give something you never expected to do? Did you do it? How did it go?
- God routinely works the unexpected in our lives. How can we prepare to expect God to do the unexpected? How can we prepare to be part of it?
- God does not always meet our expectations. We pray for something we need now, but we hear no response. How do we respond when God does not meet our expectations? How do we respond when people do not meet our expectations? What healthy responses can we add to our toolbox?
- In what ways does the Gospel change the world that a king cannot?

**Close** by praying for the group's need and for God to change lives on Easter.