



On the road to Emmaus.

THE STORY: PSA 63

Do you seek and thirst for God, to be in His presence, as David did? Do you long for God's love, to please Him, praise him, and remember His mighty deeds? Does He satisfy the deepest longings of your soul? Is He the One you turn to in the night when you can't sleep? Do you meditate on *Him*, or only on His words? Do you thank Him for His help and protection, and celebrate His justice? Do you rejoice and exult in Him as He is, and place your trust and confidence in Him? If you were separated from Him for even a moment, would you long to be with Him again? The crowds in Matthew 21 longed for a king, not for the Son God sent them. They longed for what he could do for them, not for what they owed to him. Their minds were on the things of this world, not on God's glory. So they would shortly cry out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" for not being who they wanted him to be.

TALK ABOUT IT:

List some of God's attributes (His unique characteristics). (*Gen 18.25; Exo 15.11; Psa 65.6-9; also Psa 89.8; Jer 32.18; 1Joh 4.8; Rev 19.6, etc.*)

When you speak of Jesus, do others see his follower, or a person like themselves? How can you "show" them Jesus? (*e.g. Joh 13.35; Ac 18.28, 20.35; 1Tim 1.15-16*)

PRAY:

Praise God for His greatness, and for His lovingkindness as your heavenly Father.

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*To bring glory to God
Through the transforming of lives
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... and families into the gospel.*

GET INTO The STORY

LIFE OF CHRIST • LESSON 20

JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Praise and Glory belong to Jesus our King.



Preparation for Jesus' entrance

THE STORY: MAT 21:1-3

As Jesus and his disciples approach Jerusalem, he sends two of them to fetch a donkey and its colt in the village ahead. He tells them where to find them, and how to obtain them – even what to say if anyone objects, "The Lord has need of them, and he will send them at once", or "send them right back." It begs two questions. First, did he make prior arrangements for the donkey and its colt? And second, why did he need them? The answer may be the same for both: God made provision to ensure that everything necessary was *in place* to fulfill His word. And yet Jesus *asked* for the donkey and colt to ensure that everything was *completed* according to God's word and God's will. There was never any doubt that the donkey and colt would be there, because of who Jesus is. His disciples could obey confidently and not be surprised to find them waiting where Jesus said they would be (Mk. 11.4-6), or that the owner would permit them to take the beasts (Luk 19.32-34). It was all unfolding according to God's eternal plan, which cannot be thwarted or undone.

TALK ABOUT IT:

If God provided a donkey and colt to fulfill His word, what other things has God provided to fulfill His promise of eternal life? (*Gen 22.8; Jer 33.8-9; 1Joh 4.9.*)

What are some other occasions in Jesus' life that occurred to fulfill Scripture? (*e.g. Mat 3.13-15, Mat 8.17, 12.17; Joh 12.38*) Why else did they occur? (*to identify Jesus as the Messiah that was prophesied in the OT.*)

PRAY:

Thank God that you can act confidently in *obeying* His will, knowing everything necessary to *fulfill* His will is already in place, ready to reveal Christ's glory.



Prophecy of Jesus' entrance

THE STORY: MAT 21:4-5

The donkey and its colt would be used to fulfill the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." This prophecy was given over 500 years earlier. It's not as surprising that Jesus rode on these animals in accord with the prophecy, as it is to consider what the prophecy said about him: he is a king, he is righteous, he *has* salvation, and he is humble. Riding on the donkey and its colt was a sign of his humility, not of his glory. His glory was found in his kingly office, his righteous character, and the salvation inherent in him (Ac 4.12), by which he would give eternal life to as many as the Father gave to him (Joh 17.1-2). But the only thing the crowd praised was his kingship, never referring to his righteousness, or to the salvation he carried in himself. And so they missed seeing him for who he was, and what God had promised in him.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Think about Jesus. What do you know about him – who is he to you? What other things do you know about him? Why are they just as important? (*Joh 17.3*)

Why did Jesus humble himself, instead of exalting himself as the King of kings? (*Mat 4.8-10; Isa 11.3; Joh 2.23-25; Php 2.6-8*)

PRAY:

Ask God to teach you more about His majesty and more about Jesus' humility, so you'll know how much was sacrificed to bring you to Him.



Where is the Gospel?

THE STORY: PSA 118.19-29

The crowd quoted from Psalm 118.26 when they saw Jesus, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" But they had forgotten the context of it, who this man really was, how he should be greeted, and what kingdom he would usher in. "Open to me the gates of righteousness that I may enter through them." "This is the gate of the Lord" (*I am the gate for the sheep*, Joh 10.7). "I thank you that... you have become my salvation." Jesus is "the stone that the builders rejected" (1Pet 2.7). "This is the day that Lord has made" – a day of salvation (Isa 49.8).

"He has made his light to shine upon us" (Joh 12.35-36): "You are my God and I will give thanks to you... and extol you" (Joh 20.28). "His mercy endures forever" (1Pet 1.3-5) as an inheritance reserved in heaven for you, because of Jesus. The crowd may have ignored why Jesus came, and what his presence meant, but we know, and it was not about an earthly kingdom. We rejoice in the kingdom of God.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How can you rejoice in the kingdom of God and in Jesus its King? (*Psa 150*).

When you pray, how do you distinguish your earthly desires from heavenly needs? Should you? (*Mat 5.6; Mat 6.31-34; Joh 6.27; Rom 14.17*)

PRAY:

Ask God to help you discern what you need to further His kingdom, and to prefer those things over your earthly pleasures. And then celebrate Him in song.



Praise at Jesus' entrance

THE STORY: MAT 21:6-11

The disciples did as Jesus directed them. You could stop right there and consider whether you are as willing as they were to do as Jesus directed. They did even more, by placing their cloaks on the animals like saddles so that Jesus would have both a place to sit, and a place to rest his feet, in kingly fashion. The crowd spread their own cloaks on the ground for their king, and threw palm branches on the ground as well. Originally this was done at the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23.40), but now it was done as a national symbol of rejoicing – this is how they welcomed Simon Maccabee two centuries earlier. He was a conquering warrior who may have given Israel political freedom, but not peace with God. The conquest over sin and death that Jesus would bring by his blood was far different; but it was not what the people expected or wanted – despite calling Jesus the son of David, and their promised Messiah. When Jesus entered the gates, the city erupted in celebration. But not everyone knew who Jesus was. They were told it was "the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee." Jesus was far more than that, as they would soon learn.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How might you measure or display the extent of your joy at Jesus coming? How can you celebrate him as your Lord and Savior? (*Rom 12.9-21*) Will you?

Considering how we celebrate national holidays, parties, parades, and sports, why do we often celebrate Christ with less *enthusiasm*? Is that OK? Why? (*compare Isaiah 5.11-12 with Jeremiah 31.4-7*)

PRAY:

Joyfully thank God for one thing He did for you this week. Throw a party for that.