

Week 26

Palm Sunday

John 12

From Chapter 12 to the end of the book of John, he records only what was said by Jesus in private, presumably to His disciples. God is not asking you to exercise blind faith, no; He has given plenty of evidence. Will you choose to believe?

This chapter begins with the story of Mary anointing Jesus and the reactions of those present. This act of Mary was recorded in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9. Keeping in mind John's purpose for what he recorded, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and believing this you will have eternal life. Why was it important for you and me to know about this event, it was performed in the privacy of Lazarus' home and no one would have known about it if Jesus disciples hadn't told us? I think it made a tremendous impression on them all, thus 3 men wrote about it. What a contrast between the tender loving care of Jesus by Mary and the treachery planned by Judas. All these people were close to Jesus but that is not enough is it? There must be faith, trust, and obedience to constitute a real relationship with Him. I believe Mary was anointing Jesus for burial, it was clear to her that He would die.

John 12:1-2

Jesus had arrived in Bethany from Ephraim (where we left him in chapter 11) and in another six days was Passover. Remember each Passover discussed represents the passing of a year. The events of chapter 12 through 21 all occurred in the last week of Jesus life. So this is the final visit to His friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

It had been only a few weeks since Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, a miracle which brought many Jews to faith in Jesus but angered the Jewish leaders to the point where they began to plot Jesus death.

Simon gave a dinner in Jesus honor and perhaps in Lazarus honor as well. Each person in the story is shown in his or her relationship to Jesus. Martha honored Jesus with her gift of hospitality, serving Him a meal. Mary expressed her love for Jesus by giving a very special and expensive gift. Matthew and Mark tell us this meal was held at the home of Simon the leper-probably healed by Jesus.

John 12:3

This ointment was made from an herb called spikenard from the mountains of India, and it was imported in alabaster bottles. This was such a valuable possession that people used it for investment purposes as gold is used today

John 12:4-6

According to Matthew and Mark, all the disciples were offended that Mary had "wasted" this expensive ointment. However, Judas Iscariot verbalized the offense, the nard was worth nearly a year's wages according to Judas.

Then John's commentary regarding Judas' motive, could be literally translated "he lifted or stole what was in the money bag". We have no evidence that Judas actually cared about the poor or gave them anything. That is often the way of people, they claim to have such compassion but never give any of their own substance to help. JC Ryle said in the 18th century "There are few greater impostors in the world than some of those who are pretending perpetually to care about the poor. The truest friend of the poor will be found among those who do the most for Christ. It is the successors of Mary who do the most for the poor, not the successors of Judas."

Jesus knew what was in Judas heart; that he loved money and that he would betray Jesus for 30 silver coins. The power of the love of money is amazing; nothing else seems to be able to wither the heart so thoroughly. No wonder the bible says the Love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Judas life was a lie; Jesus said Satan is the Father of liars, lying opens the door for Satan to come into the life and influence. Obviously Satan used Judas because of his dishonesty. Judas had been chosen to be an apostle, a preacher of the kingdom of heaven and turned out to be a liar, a thief and a traitor. It almost seems impossible that a man could be chosen to be a disciple of Christ, Been close to Him for 3 years, have seen the miracles, have heard the teachings and prove to be so corrupt and rotten. It certainly proves the hardness of heart that is possible and the depth of corruption a man can sink into.

John 12:7—8

Jesus let them know that the nard had not been wasted in fact He said this act would be remembered wherever the gospel was told. Friends, if your love of God motivates you to bring Him your gift, especially the gift of your life, you may be criticized by friends and family but He will never forget.

John 12:9-11

Remember Jews came from all over the world to Passover in Jerusalem. Apparently many heard of the miracle of Lazarus being raised from the dead and wanted to see him for themselves. Just look at the depths of sin the Pharisees are falling into. Sin always gains momentum. The leaders already had a plan to kill Jesus and now they included Lazarus. Since he was the one resurrected by Jesus, Lazarus was an embarrassment to them, a life size witness to Jesus power. What was the problem? John tells us; many of the Jews, were leaving traditional Judaism and believing in Jesus.

John 12:12-13

The day after the dinner in Bethany Jesus made his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, what we call Palm Sunday. Remember Bethany was only about 2 miles outside Jerusalem. This event was mentioned in all 4 gospel accounts and John's description is the briefest. John let his readers know that there was a large crowd, Josephus estimates 3 million people would have been in Jerusalem at that time. Probably most of the people there did not relate the entry of Jesus entry with Old Testament prophecy. Some commentators stated that they believe that Jesus or the Holy Spirit influenced this crowd coming to Him, that they were divinely drawn to this encounter.

Prior to Passover, on "Lamb Selection Day", religious Jews would choose a perfect, unblemished lamb for the sacrifice. The lamb then be shut up for a period of time to be observed and to make sure it was perfect. It is no coincidence that this event, Jesus riding into Jerusalem on

the colt of a donkey in full view of all the people, He was the Lamb of God, being selected and set apart for sacrifice.

Notice the quote from the old testament, Psalm 118:26. Hosanna means "please save us". Coming in the Name of the LORD recognizes His authority. They thought their king had come to liberate them from Roman rule. But these people had the wrong idea about Jesus. They were sure Messiah would be a national leader who would restore their nation to its former glory so they didn't pay attention to the prophets and they missed Jesus real mission. When it became obvious he was not going to fulfill their plans for Him they turned against Him.

John 12:14-15

Jesus rode on the colt of a donkey, emphasizing His humility. So He came in the way He was expected from the prophets. A conquering King rides in on a horse, Jesus came not to conquer politically but to conquer sin.

Consider this prophecy from Zechariah

9:9 Rejoice greatly daughter of Zion

See, your king comes to you.

He is triumphant and victorious,

Humbly riding on a donkey,

Yes, on a colt, the offspring of a beast of burden.

Apparently the people thought they were welcoming a King who had come to liberate them from Rome.

John 12:16

This is John's commentary, a when/then statement that I always mark in my bible with an arrow from the when to the then. It shows an action and a result.

What John is telling us is that the disciples had no clue as to what Jesus was doing. His method of entry into Jerusalem was so out of character for Him, they were really confused. For Him to call attention to Himself in this way was not expected. However, we know that "the time for Him to die had come". His hour had come, the true Passover Lamb was about to be slain, the true atonement blood was to be shed, when Messiah was to be "cut off" according to Daniel 9:28. After His crucifixion and resurrection all these things became clear to them with the help of the Holy Spirit. No doubt, He also explained to them the meaning of all the OT prophecies concerning the Messiah and how Jesus had fulfilled them.

This is why we can trust the scriptures; the Holy Spirit came along side these men and reminded them of all Jesus had done, but not only that, the Holy Spirit illumined their minds so that they understood why all these things happened.

This is why I ask the Holy Spirit to help me study and to teach, He knows what I need to know and He helps me understand. He is my Teacher, My Helper and my Counselor. This proves again that every word of scripture is given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. JC Ryle has said; "Happy is the bible reader who believes the words of the Bible to mean exactly what they seem to mean. Such a one has got the true key of knowledge in looking forward to things to come".

It's so important to consider that we see here all things prophesized about Jesus in His first Advent being fulfilled exactly and this should help you know for certain that all things prophesized about His Second coming will also be fulfilled literally. I hope you will spend some time studying so that you will be a workman who is not ashamed when Jesus comes.

It's obvious that the Disciples were unaware that they were participating in a mighty accomplishment of scripture. You and I have no idea of how our lives are involved in the carrying out of God's purposes at this time. When we wake up in the new world we will be amazed at the full meaning of many things which happened through us and in us without our even being aware of it.

John 12:17-19

When Jesus entered Jerusalem large crowds gathered to welcome Him. Many of those people had seen Him raise Lazarus from the dead. They flocked to Jesus because they either saw or heard about this great miracle but their adoration was short lived. None of this was done in secret but in full view of everyone, Jesus drew them to Himself. He was in charge, He was not a victim, and He willingly gave Himself as our Substitute. We have a willing and loving Savior.

All this exasperated the Pharisees. They had hoped they could easily and secretly get rid of Jesus but now the crowds were flocking to Him and it seemed impossible to dispose of Him with all the people adoring Him.

Those who try to stop Christ have a hopeless task. People can spend a lifetime resisting and rejecting Christ only to find they have destroyed themselves.

John 12:20-22

It sounds like the whole world has gone after Him, as we see a group of Greek speaking Jews or Gentiles trying to approach Jesus. God chose a perfect time for the events of Jesus crucifixion, with all the foreigners in Rome; the stories would be carried far and wide. God was training missionaries before Jesus gave the great commission.

Perhaps they chose to speak to Phillip because he had a Greek name, perhaps they knew him, and most likely he spoke Greek since he was from Bethsaida a town in Galilee near the Greek territory called Decapolis.

Perhaps in an effort to screen the requests, Phillip talked to the other disciples first.

John 12:23-24

I don't know if the Greeks' request was ever granted but Jesus' answer here gave instruction regarding the necessity of His death. The hour had come; it was time for death rather than kingly honor. Through His death He made it possible for us to come to God.

This statement of Jesus pictures perfectly the necessary sacrifice of His death. A grain of wheat buried in the ground actually dies before it becomes a blade and produces many more grains.

Jesus' death is our only way to life. Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sin and to show his power over death. His resurrection proved He has eternal life. Because He is God, He can give this life to all who believe in Him.

John 12:25-27

The followers of Jesus must have their priorities in order. If we choose to love our own life more than Jesus, we will lose our life. True disciples must be willing to suffer and experience rejection and sometimes death.

Friends to serve and follow Jesus means making radical life-style changes. What about your goals, interests, hobbies, career choices, habits? When we choose to follow Jesus we must live for His glory alone. This does not mean we have no fun, no joy. It means that all that we do is done for God's glory alone. The honor from God may be experienced partly in this life but never entirely. Meanwhile we can derive real comfort and security from knowing that God observes and remembers each and every act of service we do in His Name. None will be forgotten.

What does it mean to 'hate our life?' Jesus wants us to be so committed to living for Him that by comparison we hate life without Him. Loving our life means we guard our life for ourselves and squander it on our own pleasures and purposes. It does not mean that we are careless or destructive with the life God has given, but that we are free from self-centeredness and are willing to die if doing so will glorify Christ. By laying aside our striving for advantage, security and pleasure, we can serve God lovingly and freely. Releasing control of our life and transferring control to Christ brings eternal life and joy.