

The Hour Has Come!
John 12:12-26
Reading: Genesis 1:9-23

Bethany Baptist Church
May 16, 2021

...pray...

Read John 12:12-15

Jesus' *Triumphal Entry* into Jerusalem is documented in all four gospels.

We recently unpacked *Luke's version* (ch.19) for Palm Sunday.

Let's remember a few important details:

It's was the *Sunday* before *Passover Friday* and the day after Mary had *anointed* Jesus' head and feet with costly perfume in Bethany. A preview of His burial.

Jesus *approached* Jerusalem surrounded by a crowd of followers and then was *met* by an enormous crowd coming out of the city.

Jesus *stopped* and *sent* two of His disciples into the village of Bethphage to fetch a *donkey's colt*.

This was huge! Jesus was fulfilling the **OT** prophecy of **Zechariah 9:9**:

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
He is just and endowed with salvation,
Humble, and mounted on a donkey,
Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

And the moment He was *seated on that donkey*, everyone got it!

Jesus was finally, openly *declaring Himself* to be the long-awaited Messiah.

The crowd went *wild!*

Singing OT praises, *shouting* slogans of deliverance, *waving* palms branches in the air, *and laying* them on the road in front of Him.

"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD, even the King of Israel!"

But there was a *problem*.... A case of *mistaken identity*!

The crowd was expecting a *conquering, liberating hero*. One to *drive out* the Romans occupiers

But God had sent a *Suffering Servant*. One to *pay* for His people's sins.

Let's pick up John's account in 12:16 – 26.

In the immediate *aftermath* of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the Galilean rabbi is all anyone can talk about!

His *disciples*, the *crowds*, even His *enemies*.

There is *confusion* and *excitement* and *hostility*.

All of which leads to a *critical point* on the timeline of Jesus' mission.

V.23 – “*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified!*”

“*The hour has come...!*” We've been *waiting* for this practically since the beginning of John's Gospel!

What *triggered* Jesus' declaration?

What does it *mean* for Jesus?

What does it mean for *you*...?

How a group of *Greek pilgrims* signaled Jesus' *hour of glory*:

1. **The *city* aroused (vv.16-19).**
2. **His *hour* declared (vv.20-23).**
3. **His *glory* defined (vv.24-26).**

Jesus' prophetic entrance into Jerusalem stirred up the entire city!

1. John *stops* and *underscores* the importance of the *Triumphal Entry* by reviewing the reactions of the Passover pilgrims, including:
 - a. Jesus' *disciples*,
 - b. The *crowd* that followed Him from Galilee and Bethany,
 - c. The *crowd* that swarmed out of Jerusalem to meet Him,
 - d. And the increasingly frustrated and hostile *Pharisees*.

2. When you think about *all the disciples had experienced* during the preceding three years, v.16 is pretty puzzling (**READ**)!
 - a. Just consider the *teaching* they'd experienced, the *miracles* they'd witnessed, and the *testimonies* they'd heard from people like John the Baptist.
 - b. They'd *sat* at Jesus' feet during the **Sermon on the Mount** and *stood* astounded as **Lazarus** had stumbled out of his grave!
 - c. What was it these "future apostles" **didn't understand**...?
 - d. The *same thing* the rest of the Triumphal Entry crowd **didn't understand**!
 - i. Yes, they understood the importance of sitting on *Zechariah's colt*; that Jesus was proclaiming that He is Messiah.
 - ii. But *what kind* of Messiah? Like the crowd, even Jesus' closest followers still believed that their Master had come as a *Super-David*. A *conquering King* to throw off the yoke of the *Roman occupiers*.
 - iii. Despite all Jesus had taught, they *still* weren't prepared for a Messiah whose mission was to *die* on a cross to *ransom* sinners.

- e. In fact, John makes it clear that not until *after* Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection ("*glorification*") did the Twelve understand that the Scriptures had always promised a Messiah who was a Suffering Servant.
 - i. I'm sure they'd read Isaiah's prophecy in 53, *But He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for iniquities.*
 - ii. Yet it apparently that went *right over their heads!*
 - f. So as the disciples *followed* Jesus into Jerusalem *they still believed* what *everyone else believed*, that they were following a military liberator – *Israel's liberator.*
3. And Jesus and His disciples were followed by a *crowd* that came with them out of Galilee. As they approached Jerusalem they *picked up numbers*. The most recent addition was a *contingent from Bethany* that had witnessed *Jesus call Lazarus* out of the grave.
- a. This crowd had been *talking about Jesus and Lazarus* for days, and they were convinced that if Jesus could **raise** *Lazarus from the dead*, He could **throw** *Caesar out of Palestine!*
 - b. So everywhere they went, they *testified* to Jesus' *death-defeating power*, and soon all of Jerusalem knew the story of Jesus and Lazarus.

4. Which explains a *second crowd* in the Triumphal Entry account. If you read the story carefully (M,M,L,J), a *crowd* came up to Jerusalem *with* Jesus, and *another crowd* came out of Jerusalem to *meet* Him.
 - a. The two crowds are *related!* **Let's re-read v.17&18.**
 - b. The *first* crowd has been talking about the *sign of Lazarus* for days.
 - c. Then as news of Jesus' approach *reaches Jerusalem*, the city practically empties (*a second crowd*) to see this Galilean rabbi who *raises the dead!*
 - d. The combined crowds *wait* as Jesus calls for the humble donkey, and *erupts* as Jesus takes His seat! *Messiah has come!*
 - e. It was as if *all of Israel*, whipped into a *messianic frenzy*, followed Jesus into *David's Royal City*, palm branches waving, and voices singing. *"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

5. In my *sanctified imagination*, I can see a *cluster of Pharisees* standing together on *Jerusalem's walls* as Jesus *sweeps into the city*. They are *wringing* their hands and *shaking* their heads. ***This is bad!***
 - a. In fact, we've *witnessed a scene* just like this, days earlier, in the hours following the *raising of Lazarus*.
 - b. The Sanhedrin had gathered to discuss the "*Jesus Dilemma*." If this *rogue rabbi* stirred up a *messianic uprising*, Rome would *crush* them, *disband* the Sanhedrin, and possibly *pull down* the Temple.
 - c. They had already *determined* (11:53) to *put Him death*. But it's just getting *worse*.
 - d. The Pharisees *point their fingers* at one another: *"You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"*
 - e. And for the moment, *it appears it has...*

"Look, the world has gone after Him!"

In more ways than *one*.... Because *maybe* the Pharisees' *complaint* is a *prophetic preview* of what happens next

The Son of Man's *hour* is declared (read vv.20-24).

1. We've noted that Passover was one of Judaism's *three* biggest *annual festivals*. Historians tell us that Jerusalem's population would swell to over a *million worshipers*, from all around the Roman Empire.
2. Among the crowds is a *contingent of Greeks* (20). These are *ethnic* Greeks who are either *God-fearers* (who are *attracted* to Judaism without *formally converting*) or *proselytes* (converted but not circumcised).
 - a. As such, they were *forbidden* to enter any further into the Temple than the *Court of the Gentiles*. To *trespass* further would be to *invite death*!
 - b. We **can't** say where they came from. They could have been from *any part* of the *Greek speaking world*. *Jewish people* and therefore *Jewish influence* were dispersed across the Empire.
 - c. How did Jesus *get their attention*? I assume they *got caught-up* in His *Triumphal Entry*! Either *swept up* with the rest of the pilgrims coming up to Jerusalem or sucked out of the city by the worshipers who poured out to greet Him!
 - d. **Willem Hendriksen** makes a lovely observation about these men: *these pilgrims have gone from Greek philosophy and Roman gods to worship the God of Israel. But their journey is **not** yet over. The God of Israel has promised His Son as Savior of the world. And these men want to know *more*...!*

3. Perhaps Philip was *standing* on the edge of a crowd, *listening* to Jesus teach. A group of men *worm* their way through the bodies, *working* their way up next to Philip.
 - a. *"Sir, we would see Jesus."*
 - b. *Why Philip?* Perhaps because, although Jewish, he had a *Greek name*. And *Galilee* was more influenced by *Greek culture* than other parts of Israel. In fact, Philip might have *spoken Greek*.
 - c. Instead of taking them to *straight to Jesus*, Philip first checks with *Andrew*. Andrew was *also* from Galilee and his *name* is also Greek.
 - d. But the decision to *grant an audience* with the Master feels *over their paygrade*. After all, they've often *heard Jesus say* that His mission is to the *lost sheep of Israel*.
 - e. So *leaving* the Greeks to wait, the disciples *take* their request to Jesus.

4. Jesus makes *a surprising response!* But first let's *remember something* Jesus has often said:
 - a. **2:4** - As His mother *hinted* that He needed to perform a *wedding miracle*, Jesus cautioned her, *"Woman, what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."*
 - b. **7:30** - At the *Feast of the Booths*, Jesus appeared and claimed to be sent by God. *So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him because His hour had not yet come.*
 - c. **8:20** - The Pharisees challenge Jesus: *"Where is your Father? Jesus answered, "You neither know Me nor My Father. I you knew Me, you would know My Father also." The words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; but no one arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come."*

- d. Jesus' **hour** was that *exact* Passover on God's *eternal timeline* in which the Lamb of God would *take away the sin of the world* by His *sin-atonement death*.
- i. And He *would not (could not)* surrender Himself to His enemies **one second earlier**.
 - ii. But *now*, hearing of this contingent of eager Greeks, Jesus says *this (23): "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified!"* The hour no longer **waits**, *the hour has come!*
 - iii. Up to this point in John, Jesus always referred to "*His hour*" in *future tense* language,
 - iv. But from this point forward, *the hour* is upon Him!
5. Let's *think about* this encounter with the Greeks a little more....
- a. How many different *individuals* and *groups* wanted to see Jesus after the *Triumphal Entry!*?! Why did John choose to document *these* Greeks' request? Here are a couple of thoughts Bible teachers offer:
 - i. These Greeks *foreshadow* the spread of the gospel to the *Gentiles*. The Pharisees' words would soon be proven ironically true: "*Look, the world has gone after Him!*"
 - ii. These Greeks are also a reminder the *Church* and *Israel* are two distinct entities. The *Church* is largely comprised of *Gentile believers* and *Israel* has been *put on "pause"* (Romans 9-11). But God has *promised the day* in which Israel will embrace Jesus as Messiah!

But what *glory* is Jesus talking about (read vv.23 – 26)?

1. Jesus' *glorification* is mentioned in **vv.16 & 23**. I noted briefly that this is a reference to His *crucifixion, burial and resurrection*, just days away.
2. Now Jesus' explains the *glory* of His death/resurrection and what it means for you.
 - a. "*Truly, truly, I say to you.*" We've heard that so many times in John, and we know that Jesus is *demanding our attention*.
 - b. He will be *gloried* by ***dying*** – it's the only way...
 - i. Jesus appeals to the image of a *single grain of wheat*, clinging to its *life on the stalk*.
 - ii. If it *clutches* to the stalk, it will never be more than just a *single grain* – **unproductive, unfulfilled**.
 - iii. *Only* if it will *surrender* its hold and *fall* to the earth can it *accomplish* its purpose.
 - iv. So if it *let's go*, the *one grain* falls into the soil and dies. But from that *one death* springs forth an abundant harvest!
 1. It's the principle of *lesser to greater*.
 2. The *people of God* (Jew or Greek) are the *harvest of Christ*.
 - v. Creation order (Gen 1) teaches "*like produces like*," and if Christ *dies* and is *raised* to bring forth a harvest, then that harvest will be in the *image of Christ*! And *that* would be *us*!

3. Jesus goes on to *identify* the men and women who are the *fruit* of His harvest... *you should listen to Him carefully!* **Re-read vv.25-26.**
 - a. Jesus places *two lives* before you (25): the *life* of this world and the *life* of His eternal kingdom.
 - i. He places a *choice* before you: what matters more to you, the *life* of this world (your old life) or *life* in the Kingdom?
 - ii. You **can't** have it both ways. Which do you want?
 - iii. **John MacArthur** writes: *Jesus does not identify true saving faith by its **perfection** but by its **affection** and its **direction**. Those who truly come to Christ **love** Him above all else.*

- b. To choose the *Kingdom path* is choose the *servant's path* (26).
- i. We live in an age of *personal rights* on steroids. Who would *choose* to be a servant...!?! But that's the choice.
 - ii. There are tones both of *warning* and *reward* in Jesus' call:
 1. Jesus' *hour has come*, and He must *die*. Jesus said the *servant* is not above His *master*! So we must begin by *dying* to the world and *choosing* to live for Jesus. And *who knows* where God will lead us from there...?
 2. But even *greater* is the promise of the servant's *reward*.
 - a. *First*, to be **with Him**. *Where I am, there My servant will also be*. Which ultimately means *with Him* in Heaven.
 - i. *"I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there you may also be."*
 - b. *Second*, the reward of the Father's **honor**.
 - i. The Bible promises *those who honor Me, I will honor* (1 Sam 2:30).
 - ii. The basic vocabulary (*honor*) here is of *real, substantive reward*.
 - iii. Reward that the *fires of testing* cannot destroy and the *sands of never-ending time* will **not** erode!

Read v.26: *If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor Him.*

Everyone in v.24 (*the fruit of Christ's death*) is also in v.25 (*lover of Christ*) and thus also in v.26 (*servant of Christ*).

How do you know that you are part of the *harvest of Christ's death*?

1. Remember that creation principle: *like produces like*.
2. Paul wrote (Rom 8) the *purpose* to which God *called us* is to *become conformed to the image of His Son*.
3. Today, do you look *more like Jesus* than you ever did before?

How do you know that you *love Christ* above anything this world offers?

1. Do you *hunger and thirst for righteousness*?
2. Do you choose Jesus' presence above the companionship of this world?
"Sir, we would see Jesus!"

How do you know that you are *Jesus' servant*?

1. Are Jesus' commands *mandatory* or *optional*?
2. *Where is Jesus...? Are you there?*
3. Do you have a holy ambition to hear these words: *"Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master."*

...pray...