

THE REAL JESUS: HIS CROSS

Week Two | August 26, 2018 | Jesus: The Triumphant Prince of Peace

PREPARATION

GETTING READY

Before your group meets next time, spend some time alone in God's Word reading through this week's text, Luke 19:28–48. Pray that God, through His Spirit, would bring to life the truth of this text and how it applies to your life.

THIS WEEK

KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH

Jesus is a triumphant King, but He doesn't look like what you might expect. He is humble, merciful, and a bringer of peace.

THEOLOGY APPLIED

Jesus is the only Savior and the only truly good King. He should be worshipped, honored, and obeyed.

MEDITATE

"The whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'" (Luke 19:37b-38).

GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.

When celebrities go on tour they typically have a list of requests and demands sent ahead of them. Many of the items on the list are rather ridiculous. For example, Mariah Carey's list includes 20 white kittens, 100 white doves, a \$200 bottle of cabernet sauvignon, two dozen white roses, and vanilla aromatherapy candles. Beyoncé is known for her demand of heavily seasoned baked chicken legs and only Pepsi products. Kanye West requires all-white decor in his dressing room, a personal chef, and Versace towels cut into smaller sizes for him to wipe his brow. He also insists no one in his presence wear man-made fibers. Only 100% cotton is allowed. These requests are rather ridiculous, and they don't make much sense. But, you better believe they are always obeyed! The wish of celebrities is our command, regardless of how strange it is. Celebrities are our "royalty." We welcome them into our town by rolling out the red carpet, and we honor them by meeting their every request.

Engrained in us is the idea that those who are important should be honored and worshipped through our adoration and obedience. We know we should prepare the way for their arrival in our city and make them feel honored. We know that the word of important people should not be questioned, only obeyed. Why is it that we act this way for flawed humans who happen to be put on a cultural pedestal and yet are unwilling to demonstrate this same kind of honor to the King of the universe? The Real Jesus is far greater than even our most popular celebrities.



Today we will study Luke's account of Jesus' "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem. This event is far more important than a celebrity coming to town for a concert. It is Jesus' royal entry, full of excitement and preparation. In contrast to other famous arrivals that are full of arrogance, pride, extravagance, and spoiled behavior, His was full of humility and mercy.

This event was filled with mixed emotions and various underlying tones. The arrival of the King brought great joy. His subjects honored and worshipped Him. Yet Jesus also knew what lay ahead of Him. He knew what it would cost Him to establish His kingdom. He was the King who would usher in full and final peace, but He knew what the terms of that peace were. In the midst of joy, He also wept.

No celebrity has this mindset, because no celebrity is this important. The triumphal entry shows us that Jesus is worthy of our worship, our honor, and our obedience. In his work, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, Albert Schweitzer explains that the wheel of history did not crush Him. Instead, Jesus turned the wheel.

II UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

In today's lesson we will look at Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem. We will see what this triumphal entry says about who He is and how we should respond to Him in order to give Him the honor and glory He deserves.

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1. DO WHAT JESUS SAYS
 2. GIVE JESUS WHAT HE DESERVES
 3. TAKE WHAT JESUS OFFERS

GOING DEEPER

+ *This next section will help show what God's Word says about this week's particular focus. Read through the Scripture passages and connect the text to this week's biblical truth.*

DO WHAT JESUS SAYS

■ LUKE 19:28–34

Q: *What did Jesus tell His disciples to do in preparation for His arrival in Jerusalem?*

Q: *What did Jesus tell them they should say when people questioned them about it?*

Back in Luke 9:51, Jesus “set his face toward Jerusalem.” He knew what was before Him and He was ready. Nothing would break His determination. He had come for a purpose and was ready to fulfill it. In Luke 19:28, we read that Jesus “went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.” This wording indicates that He was walking ahead of His disciples. Perhaps they still had no idea what was going on. They followed Him, but maybe lagged behind.

Then, they arrived at the Mount of Olives. Even this place was a fulfillment of prophecy. Zechariah 14:4 says the Messiah would appear on this mountain. Once again, Jesus was reminding them who He was, fulfilling what was spoken of Him in the Old Testament. He was the centerpiece of God's plan of redemption.

In verses 30–31, Jesus tells two of His disciples to go to the village. He tells them that when they get there they will find a colt that has never been ridden. He instructs them to untie it and bring it to Him. What a weird request. Why in the world would He want a colt? It would make more sense for Him to ask for a beautiful, majestic horse. What could He possibly have in mind? Jesus knew this was a strange request and that they had no idea what was going on.

He also knew the people who saw them take the colt would be just as confused. So, He said if they were questioned, they were simply to say, “The Lord needs it.” No other explanation was needed. Even though it didn’t make sense, the disciples did what Jesus told them to do.

We read what happened in verses 32–34. The disciples found the colt tied up just like Jesus said. As they started to untie it, the owners asked them what they were doing. Who comes and takes away someone’s colt? It would have been their means of providing for their family. Surely the disciples knew how crazy they looked, and even what they were risking. They told the owners what Jesus told them to say—“The Lord needs it.” That was the only explanation the owners needed. It didn’t have to make sense. Beyond being an odd request, it also cost the owners a lot. They had no idea what the future was supposed to look like. But it didn’t matter. He is the Lord. He is to be obeyed without question, even when it doesn’t make sense.

What the disciples may not have realized at the time is that Jesus’ request made perfect sense. It was fulfillment of another prophecy written over 500 years earlier. Zechariah 9:9 says, “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.” Jesus’ command was perfectly in line with God’s plan. In fact, it was the fulfillment of it. But often God’s plans and purposes are far beyond our understanding. In those times, rather than demanding a clearer explanation, we are called to humbly submit and obey.

Not only did the colt fulfill a prophecy, it also speaks of the type of king Jesus is. He is a humble king, not an arrogant one. He is the kind of king who “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped” (Philippians 2:5-6). His choice of riding on a donkey showed His servant spirit, which stood in sharp contrast to the pomp and circumstance of the Roman empire. He is unlike any other king.

❖: *Is there a particular example in your life where God is calling you to obey Him even though it makes no sense to you?*

❖: *Is God calling you to surrender something to Him that costs you greatly? Does surrendering it put your future in question?*

❖: *Is the simple call to obedience in this passage—“The Lord needs it”—enough for you? Do you have the humility to simply obey, or are you demanding a clearer explanation?*

Q: *How does the knowledge that Jesus is in complete control over every circumstance encourage you in humble obedience?*

Q: *Are there times in your life when God has worked wonders through calling you to simple obedience? How does remembering these times strengthen your faith as you obey Him today?*

GIVE JESUS WHAT HE DESERVES

■ LUKE 19:35-40

Q: *How did the disciples and the people show Him honor?*

Q: *Why were the Pharisees upset?*

After they brought the colt to Jesus, the disciples threw their cloaks on the colt and He sat on it. The triumphal entry began. The others spread their cloaks on the ground as a sign of reverence as He rode down the road. They recognized Him as royalty. Everyone was looking at Jesus. The crowd began praising God. They had seen many mighty works through Jesus and their hearts were filled with thanksgiving and worship! The procession grew in exuberance as the people's Deliverer passed by.

Luke doesn't mention the people laying down palm branches, but it is part of Matthew's account. Palm branches were a symbol of joy and victory when a king returned from battle. They were also frequently laid on graves as a sign of eternal life. Through the palm branches, the concepts of victory and eternal life were connected and attributed to Jesus. In the other gospel accounts, the people cry, "Hosanna!" Many people assume this is a way of saying "Praise the Lord." In reality, it means, "God, save us!" What a beautiful picture of worship that points directly to who Jesus is, the Real Jesus.

Being their usual kill-joy selves, the Pharisees began to grumble and complain when they saw the crowds worshipping Jesus. They asked Him to rebuke His disciples for worshipping Him as the Messiah. They refused to believe He was God's Chosen One. They had a picture in their minds of what the Messiah should look like, and Jesus wasn't it. Their picture was informed more by their cultural ideas than God's Word. Isn't this true for us today?

Jesus' response is perfect. He says in verse 40, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." Jesus is the God of the universe. If image bearers don't proclaim it, creation will. In this very scene, the colt who has never been ridden is tamed by its Creator and is magnifying Him.

One commentator points out that Jesus' "come back" to the Pharisees subtly implies that the rocks know more about what is going on than they do! Even the rocks know what the Pharisees refuse to know—that Jesus is the Messiah, the Promised One.

❏: *What are you withholding in your life that you should lay down at Jesus' feet?*

❏: *Sometimes we hold out on expressing our joy because we feel out of place, awkward, or uncomfortable. But in this passage, the people freely express their gratitude and adoration. How can you grow in this area in your life? What does that look like for you?*

TAKE WHAT JESUS OFFERS

❏ LUKE 19:41–48

As Jesus continues His procession, He reaches a point where He sees a panorama of the city of Jerusalem. Rather than admiring its shining temple and gleaming white buildings like most people, Jesus saw the city and wept. He saw a city lost in sin and rebellion. Right after the joy of being celebrated as King, Jesus experiences deep sorrow. He mourns over the lostness that is before Him. He didn't just shed a publicity tear. To weep means to burst into tears or to sob. It implies grief and mourning.

In verses 41–42, we see Jesus weeping over the fake religiosity and false gods that kept the people in bondage. *The Bible Exposition Commentary* says, “No matter where Jesus looked, He found cause of weeping ... If He looked within, He saw spiritual ignorance and blindness ... As He looked around, Jesus saw religious activity that accomplished very little ... As Jesus looked ahead, He wept as He saw the terrible judgment that was coming to the nation, the city, and the temple.” The people in the city were looking for peace, but in all the wrong places. The things they pursued in search of fulfillment and a settled heart all led to further bondage.

Jesus’ heart was broken because He saw the judgment that was to come on the unrepentant city that refused to see the Messiah and turn to Him in repentance. In verses 42–44, Jesus prophesies about the destruction of the city and the temple and the storming of the city that would happen in 70 AD. Even in this scene we get a glimpse into the heart of this very different kind of King. He grieves over sin and death, rebellion, and hard-heartedness. He looks upon lostness not with hatred or indifference. He is not happy about the coming judgment. No, He mourns.

Jesus was right there. And yet Jerusalem rejected Him. They did not want what He had to offer. They wanted to earn it on their own. They wanted to go their own way. But because He paid the price of sin on the cross and took God’s wrath upon Himself, He is able to extend mercy to repentant sinners.

The triumphal entry gives us a portrait of the very different kind of King He is. He is both victorious and humble, just and merciful. He holds the universe in His hands, and yet rides on the back of a donkey. He is the God of peace, even though that peace came at great cost to Himself. The triumphal entry also gives us an overview of the Christian life. We are called to honor this King through our repentance, obedience, and worship. Only then will we experience the fullness of peace and joy.

Q: *Are you aware of God’s heart of compassion for you? Are you aware of His eagerness to forgive you? Do you realize that He mourns over the sin that enslaves you?*

Q: *Read Romans 2:4 and discuss it in light of Luke’s account of Jesus’ compassion toward Jerusalem.*

NEXT STEPS

+ *Connect the truths from God's Word to your daily life. Process how what you've learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.*

- Q: *Do you mourn over lostness like Jesus does? If not, why? How can you feel what He feels more deeply?*
- Q: *Look back to the book of Jonah. What contrasts do you see between Jonah and Jesus?*
- Q: *In what ways does the Jesus we encounter in this passage stand in direct contrast to the counterfeit Jesuses we discussed last week?*
- Q: *The familiarity of this story may make it easy for us to forget that it was a real, historical event. Imagine what it would have been like actually being there.*
- Q: *Think about current leaders and "kings" in our society today. In what ways does Jesus stand in contrast to them? Can you think of a leader who displays the servant heart, humility, and compassion of Jesus? If you are in a position of leadership or power, how can you better display these qualities in order to follow in the footsteps of Christ?*

PRAY

+ *Use these prayer points to connect your time in prayer to this week's focus.*

- Jesus, thank You that through Your Word we can see You more clearly. Thank You that You are unlike any other king that has ever existed. Thank You for being full of glory and majesty, and yet willing to come to earth and walk among us. Thank You for looking on us with compassion and calling us to repentance through Your kindness. Please help me to honor You through my obedience and surrender. May Your Word be my command and may I willingly receive the grace You offer me.

LUKE 19:38A “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord” is a line from the Hallel Psalms (Psalms 113–118). These psalms were chanted at the end of the Passover meal. It was yet another way of acknowledging that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah.

LUKE 19:38B “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” This cry should remind us of the angels who praised God at Christ’s birth in Luke 2:14: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” This song was for peace on earth, something that has not been the case since the fall. The Messiah was the one who would reverse the curse.

**All exegetical content and commentary resourcing for this lesson was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes, the Christ Centered Exposition (Luke), and Preaching the Word (Luke).*

