

Palm Sunday

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- Do you have a sweet tooth or do you prefer savory food? What's one favorite dish based on your preference?
 - Did you and your family celebrate Easter growing up? If so, how would you celebrate?
 - Why do you think Easter is such an important time for followers of Jesus?
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

All four Gospel accounts tell the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem as people sing and celebrate. We remember this moment on Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. Jesus knew people would misunderstand his arrival in Jerusalem. They expected him to quickly conquer the Romans and bring back the glory days of David. So he told a parable intended to correct their thinking about how the kingdom of God would arrive. Only when we understand the parable can we see what Jesus's arrival on Palm Sunday means for our lives today.

WHILE THE KING IS AWAY

READ: Luke 19:11-13

Regional kings would travel to Rome to get their authority ratified by the emperor, then return to rule. Jesus is about to enter into Jerusalem, but his entrance will soon be followed by a departure. After his death and resurrection, he will go to the Father's right hand in heaven. The nobleman's time away will be like the time between Jesus's departure and promised return. While he's away, Jesus has called his followers to "engage in business" by building for the kingdom.

DISCUSS: What do you think it looks like for followers of Jesus to "engage in business" by building for the kingdom?

WHO WILL YOU BE?

READ: Luke 19:14-24

DISCUSS: What stands out to you about the way the nobleman responds to his servants when he returns?

The characters in this parable represent three different ways to respond to Jesus's rule – rebellion, faithfulness, or fraud. Rebels are those who live on the earth, in the boundaries of the reign of King Jesus, and yet reject his authority through disobedience. The faithful are those who carry out the calling of King Jesus. The fraudulent are those who claim to be servants of Jesus but don't build for the kingdom.

THE REWARD FOR THE FAITHFUL

READ: Verses 16-19 again

DISCUSS: Why do you think it's significant for followers of Jesus that the faithful servants are rewarded with authority?

The faithful servants aren't rewarded with an early retirement and a life of leisure. They're given more resources and authority to keep engaging in business. When King Jesus returns, those who've had their focus on his kingdom will keep doing kingdom work, just in a far greater, more rewarding, less frustrated way (because all resistance will be exiled from the kingdom). This is a great encouragement for followers of Jesus, because the kingdom work done in this life matters in the next.

GRACE *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

THE KING SLAUGHTERED FOR THE REBELS AND FRAUDS

READ: Luke 19:24-27 and 41-44

The parable comes to a severe and sobering end. Many Bible scholars believe this points to the severity of judgment when Jesus returns. Others believe the nobleman's severity is a contrast to the mercy Jesus seen on the cross. Both views have merit. Yes, Jesus will deal fully and finally with sin when he appears to reign over the new creation. He is the King of Justice. But first he was slaughtered in front of the rebellious and fraudulent citizens of the world, inviting them to repent and be faithful to him. He is the King of mercy.

CHANGE *APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- What stands out to you from this parable and how might you apply it to your life?
 - How does the promise of authority as a reward for faithfulness change the way you think about your purpose in this life?
 - The fraudulent servant claimed to be loyal but spent his time seeking his own pursuits. In what areas of your life are you tempted to live for your own glory rather than God's?
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PRAYER *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- Pray that we would see this age – between Jesus's ascension and return – as Jesus intended us to, as an opportunity for faithfulness.
- Pray that we would live our lives in every way for God's glory.