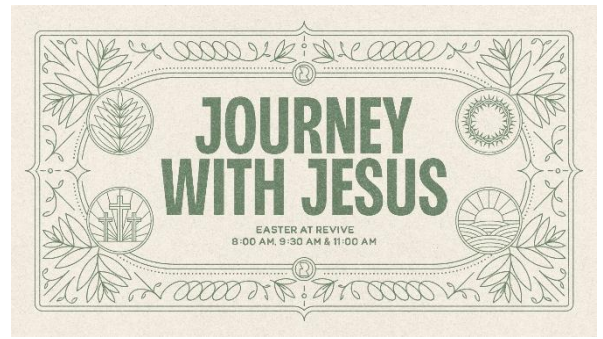


## GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

John 12:9–19

Palm Sunday Promise



About this Series:

This Holy Week series invites us into the final, powerful days of Jesus' life before the cross and resurrection. These are the moments that define what it truly means to follow Him—through confusion, unmet expectations, and radical love. As Jesus enters Jerusalem to cries of 'Hosanna,' He already knows He's heading to the cross. Still, He moves forward—not with shouts, but with silence. Not as the King they wanted, but the Savior we need.

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Goals of this Week's Discussion/ Study:

In John 12:9–19, we witness Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem—an event marked by excitement, hope, and misunderstanding. This study will help us explore how different groups responded to Jesus, what kind of King they were hoping for, and how Jesus' quiet entrance challenges our expectations of God. What does it mean to follow a Savior who doesn't always meet our expectations—but always fulfills His promises?

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Connections with the 7 Marks of a Jesus Follower:

- Stand in Awe: Like the crowds, we're invited to gather and celebrate—but also to reflect and follow faithfully.
  - Walk in the Word: Jesus' way of peace calls us to surrender our power and expectations.
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Suggested Starter Questions:

- When have you had an expectation that didn't turn out the way you hoped—but still turned out good?
- What do you usually think of when you hear "Palm Sunday"? How does it set the tone for Holy Week?
- Have you ever misunderstood what God was doing, only to see it clearly later?

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Discussion:

Read John 12:9–11

*The Plot to Kill Lazarus*

<sup>9</sup>Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup>So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, <sup>11</sup>for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

- Why do you think the religious leaders were so threatened by Lazarus?
- How does their reaction reveal the danger of protecting power and control at all costs?
- What are ways we might resist truth because it challenges our comfort?

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Read John 12:12–15

*The Triumphal Entry*

<sup>12</sup>The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

"Hosanna!<sup>[a]</sup>"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"<sup>[b]</sup>

"Blessed is the king of Israel!"

<sup>14</sup>Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

<sup>15</sup>"Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;  
see, your king is coming,  
seated on a donkey's colt."<sup>[c]</sup>

- What were the people expecting from Jesus as He entered Jerusalem?
  - Why is it significant that He rode a donkey instead of a horse?
  - How does Jesus' quiet, peaceful entry challenge what we think a "Savior" should look like?
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Read John 12:16–19

### *The Crowd's Confusion*

<sup>16</sup>At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

<sup>17</sup>Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. <sup>18</sup>Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. <sup>19</sup>So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

- What stood out to you about the three groups: the cynics, the celebrators, and the curious?
  - Which group do you identify with most right now—and why?
  - What might it look like to move from curiosity or celebration into deeper commitment?
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### Applying the Text:

- What does this passage teach us about following Jesus?  
*Key Takeaway:* Jesus doesn't always meet our expectations—but He always fulfills God's promises. We must surrender our version of salvation for His.
  - What does Jesus' silence in this moment say about His character?  
*Key Takeaway:* Even when we misunderstand Him, Jesus responds with grace, patience, and love. He invites us to reflect, not react.
  - How do unmet expectations impact our faith?  
*Key Takeaway:* When we cling to our own view of what Jesus "should do," we may miss what He *is doing*. Following Jesus means releasing control.
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### Practical Application:

- Where in your life are you holding onto expectations of Jesus that might need to be surrendered?

- Which group (cynic, celebrator, curious) most challenges you—and how can you take a next step in your faith?
  - How can you practice intentional reflection this week to prepare your heart for Good Friday and Easter?
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Pray:

- Pray for humility to release your expectations and receive Jesus as He truly is.
  - Ask God to show you where you may be clinging to comfort or control.
  - Thank Jesus for His silent, powerful love—shown through His willingness to keep going, even when we don't understand.
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