



John (So That You Might Believe) (Week 9/12) Jesus' Triumphant Entry

Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect: *At Lazarus' death, Jesus was "deeply moved," showing his indignation and anger towards death. How does this emotional distress reveal Jesus' commitment to save us from sin and death?*

Warm-Up

1. Can you think of something or someone you really love, where being generous, sacrificial or even a bit 'extravagant' just felt natural?
2. Have you ever misunderstood someone at first, but later came to see who they really are more clearly?

Read John 12:1-11

3. What does Mary do? What is surprising about her actions? How does this honour Jesus?
4. How did others (e.g., Judas) perceive her actions?
5. Are you ever conscious of how others might perceive your devotion to Jesus? What aspects of Mary's devotion might shape your own costly love of Jesus?
6. What is Judas concerned about? What are the chief priests concerned about? How does this point to what they truly value?
7. How does Jesus interpret Mary's actions? How would the smell of her love and devotion linger with Jesus in the coming days?
8. Why is Jesus worthy of such costly devotion?
9. What type of devotion towards Jesus are you tempted to balk at? How would you like to grow in costly devotion towards Jesus?

Read John 12:12-19

10. How is Jesus welcomed? What do their shouts mean?
11. How does Jesus enter the city? How was this different to the type of Messiah they were hoping for?
12. What does the choice of donkey reveal about the type of King Jesus is? (Hint: read Zechariah 9:9-13)
13. How did the disciples react to Jesus' entry? Why could they only understand *after* Jesus was glorified?
14. Why is it good news that Jesus comes as the triumphant king on *God's terms*? How should that shape our expectations of Jesus as God's King? How should this give us peace about God's ultimate timing?
15. What sign has drawn the crowd to welcome Jesus? How does this sign point ahead to what will happen?
16. Read 12:31-32. What kind of death is Jesus going to face? What will be the result of it?

Apply *Who could you invite this Easter to hear about Jesus—the promised King who is worthy of our devotion, our praise, and our belief?*

Pray *Lord Jesus, give us faith to see that you are the worthy King whose glory is revealed through your death. May your love make us people who honour you with wholehearted devotion. In your victorious Name, Amen.*

GOING DEEPER

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Small Group Discussion Questions

On Your Front Line this Week

Who can you invite along to celebrate Easter with you?

For Families

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen (sermon):* "Following Christ" by Tim Keller:
<https://gospelinlife.com/sermon/following-christ/>
- *Listen (sermon):* "The Source of His Magnetism" by John Stott:
https://www.allsouls.org/Media/AllMedia.aspx?show_media=51625&show_file=59097
- *Listen (sermon):* "Extravagant Love: Mary's Anointing of Jesus" by Mark Bates:
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/sermon/such-a-waste/>
- *Read (article):* "Why is the significance of the triumphal entry?" by Got Questions:
<https://www.gotquestions.org/triumphal-entry.html>

Series Resources

- *Read:* "John: An Expository Commentary" by R C Sproul.
- *Read:* "The Gospel According to John" by Don Carson.
- *Read:* "The Message of John" by Bruce Milne. 📖
- *Read:* "The Gospel According to John" by Leon Morris.
- *Read:* "John for Everyone: Part 1" by Tom Wright. 📖
- *Read:* "Can We Trust the Gospels?" by Peter Williams. 📖
- *Read:* "Signs of the Messiah: An Introduction to John's Gospel" by Andreas Köstenberger
- *Watch:* "John" by the Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-john/>
- *Previous Series* from St Bart's (including Children's Resources):
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/jesus-is>
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/i-am>
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/truth-glory>

📖 Available to borrow from the St Bart's Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

For sermons and additional resources, visit stbarts.com.au

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JOHN (SO THAT YOU MIGHT BELIEVE)

*Week 9/12 “Jesus’ Triumphant Entry”
by Justin Lai (29/03/2026)*

예수님의 승리의 입성 | Yëcu ëë Löö në Tiëm | 耶稣荣入圣城

Bible Passage: John 12:1-19 (& 20-50)

*Gracious Father, thank you that you revealed your glory to us through your Son - the promised King.
Please give us eyes to see and hearts ready to believe and receive him. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*

Many may know the hymn - ‘In the Garden’: [by C. Austin Miles (1912; based on John 20’s Jesus’ resurrection account]

And He walks with me, and He talks with me,

And He tells me I am His own,

The lines capture something we Christians deeply treasure: closeness to Jesus, tenderness with Jesus, belonging to Jesus.

And in one sense, Mary in John 12 would understand that. She knew what it was to sit at Jesus’ feet, to weep before him, and to see his *love* for her family.

- But John 12 also shows us that **true devotion** is not just *tender* and *personal*. It is also *majestic* and *public*, grounded in who Jesus really is in the *grand* scope of God’s redemptive history.

He is not only a friend to cherish.

He is the promised King to honour.

And his glory is ultimately revealed by going through his own death for our salvation.

- So, when we come to John 12, we see Jesus’ triumphant entry.

We want to ask: *what kind of triumph is this?*

Because - just before the public praise, Jesus is anointed for burial.

And just after the public praise, Jesus speaks about being lifted up on the cross.

- **Is Jesus truly worthy of wholehearted devotion?** That’s our question today.

- And John’s answer is YES!

Yes – personally | Yes – publicly | Yes – most deeply of all, because he gives himself for us.

So let’s step it through in three parts -

Jesus is anointed for burial | Jesus is welcomed with praise | Jesus is glorified on the cross

ANOINTED FOR BURIAL | VERSES 1-8

죽음을 위해 기름 부음을 받음 | Tǝc nǝ Piǝk dǝ Thǝu | 为死而受膏

First, as Jesus is **anointed for burial**, we see that he is worthy of our personal devotion.

Verse 1: Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume."

- "Six days before the Passover" this is not just a date. John is telling us the very context of what's about to happen. Passover is near. The *True Lamb* is moving toward sacrifice. (D.A.Carson, *John*, PNTC, 427)
- And where are we? Bethany - the place where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead... So do you feel the *tension* already - the giver of life sits at the table with the man he raised, and yet he himself is moving toward death.
- There is a dinner in Jesus' honour. Martha serves (as usual). Lazarus reclines at the table, and then Mary acts.
 - She takes an expensive perfume, pours it on Jesus' feet, and wipes them with her hair.
 - This is *costly devotion*. Not a token gift. Not a polite gesture. But a *year's wages* - her savings, her security, her future - all poured out at Jesus' feet.
 - And the cost is not just financial - it's *personal*. In that culture, a woman would never let down her hair in public, let alone use it to wipe someone's feet. (D.Guthrie, *NBC*, 1051)
 - Instead of anointing his head, Mary pours it on his feet, showing the "utmost self-humbling devotion and love" (Carson, 428). Mary lowers her wealth, her reputation, and even herself before the Lord.
 - because to her, **Jesus is worth everything!**
- This is *deeply personal*.
 - This family has known Jesus' love. Mary has sat at his feet; wept before him; she has seen him call her brother out of the grave - there he is, my little brother, alive, sitting next to Jesus, smiling, chatting...she knows, Jesus is no ordinary teacher.
- So when Mary pours out this extravagance, the point is not "look how great Mary is" but, "What kind of Jesus is so worthy of this?"
- And this Jesus never changes. "He is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb 13:8)."
- So even today, He also walks with you, talks with you, and he tells you - you are his own.

Then Judas interrupts.

Verse 5 ..."Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." [But John exposes him:] 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief...

- Judas's objection sounds like he is taking the moral high ground, but it hides a false heart.

- And *that's* a warning for us.
 - It is possible to sound sensible, practical, even religious - and still have *no real devotion* for Jesus. Sometimes concerns - “even those that meet real needs,” quotes Carson, can “mask a spirit that knows nothing of worship and adoration.” (*Carson, 429*)

Then comes the key in verse 7:

“Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

- Jesus tells us what this moment really means.
- Mary may not fully understand what she is doing, she simply pours out love.
- But in Jesus’ eye, her act points forward: to his death; to his burial.
 - The fragrance filling that house is already drifting toward the tomb.
- And that changes everything - Jesus is worthy of costly *devotion*, not only because he is tender and near, but because he is the One who is going to die.
- So **true devotion** is not built on feeling alone; it is built on the **worth** of the crucified King.

Let me ask you: Do you see His worth?

WELCOMED WITH PRAISE | VERSES 9-19

찬양으로 환영을 받음 | Löör nē Duöör | 在赞美中被迎接

Second, we see Jesus’ worth more clearly as he is **welcomed with praise**. Jesus’ worth is not only personal but public. And as he moves toward Jerusalem, the excitement begins to rise.

Verse 9 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. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

- Lazarus is now living evidence - a walking proof that Jesus’ power is real.
 - The sign works! (well, sort of) Some believe, but others harden - the chief priests *even plan to kill Lazarus as well!*
- Do you see this: the same sign either draws some to faith, or drives others into deeper resistance. That’s how searching Jesus is. He never leaves people neutral.

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

“Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the king of Israel!”

- These are not vague religious words. This is royal, messianic language.
- “Hosanna” — means *save now!*

- And “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” is from Ps 118:26: God’s promised deliverer
- And Jesus is indeed the “King of Israel.”
- The crowd is saying something profoundly right - **Jesus really is the promised King.**
- This is a moment of *hope*.
 - This is not just crowd energy - not like welcoming a celebrity at a concert
 - This is Scripture coming alive:
 - history converging at this moment;
 - promises are being fulfilled;
 - Jesus, the promised King, is moving into the very centre and high point of God’s redemptive history!
 - God kept his word. *The King has arrived!*

Then Jesus does something that both *reveals* and *corrects* the moment.

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: 15 “Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.”

This fulfils Zechariah 9:9.

- Yes, he is truly King - but not the *kind of king* they expected:
 - Jesus does not come on a war horse - but on a donkey.
 - He comes in majesty, but also in meekness;
- In glory, but also in peace.
- If we read the wider promises of Zechariah 9, this King does not come to take *political* power:
 - He comes to bring peace to the nations.
 - to rule over the ends of the earth;
 - And to bring covenant salvation.
- This is a different kind of King. Not less glorious, but more!

Now John tells us in verse 16:

16 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.

- That means the *triumph* can only be understood properly through the *cross*. So even this triumphant entry is pointing forward to a glory that comes through suffering.

Then verses 17-19 keep the tension alive. The crowds grow. The excitement builds.

And the Pharisees say, “*Look how the whole world has gone after him!*”

- The triumph is real. Jesus is rightly welcomed and praised as King.
- But the responses are still divided.
- *Public excitement is not the same as saving faith.*

- That speaks to us as well:
 - We can sing the right songs, say the right words, call Jesus “King,” and still want the *wrong* Jesus.
 - A Jesus who fits my plans.
 - A Jesus who secures my convenience.
 - A Jesus who gives me life’s control, *on my own terms*.
 - But the real Jesus comes, as God’s promised King, *on God’s terms*.
 - Church, this is not bad news! In fact, this is our hope!
 - Because:
 - If Jesus fulfils God’s promises, then **God is faithful**.
 - If this King comes in peace, then we can *rest* under his rule.
 - If this King is gentle and glorious, then following him is not crushing, but beautiful.
 - Sometimes, when ministry feels tiring, when family feels strained, when resources seem thin, when the future is uncertain;
 - Our *hope* is not that we can make Jesus look triumphant.
 - Our *hope* is that the true King has already come (not riding in with force, but in humility - not demanding from us, but *first giving himself for us*).
 - And all God’s promises are secured in him, so even though we have tears, we can still cling to him. He is faithful; he is reigning; he will bring all to completion till last day!

GLORIFIED ON THE CROSS | VERSES 20-50

십자가에서 영광을 얻으심 | Aciì Nhöm nē Tim Agëër | 在十字架上得榮耀

Finally, we see that Jesus’ worth is most **glorified on the cross**. From Mary’s devotion to the crowd’s praise, we’ve begun to see *what kind of King Jesus is*. But now the rest of the chapter tells us where his kingship leads. Not to a throne in Jerusalem - but to a cross!

[In verse 23, Jesus says] “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

All through John’s Gospel, Jesus has said: “My hour has not yet come.” But now the hour has come. And what kind of hour is it? The hour of visible success? The hour of political takeover?
No: it is the *hour of glory* through death!

[Jesus explains in verse 24] “Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

Jesus is speaking **first about himself**.

- His death will not be a tragic loss, but a fruitful salvation.
- The King’s glory is deeper than public praise - his glory is through giving himself so that many may live.
- Death is not Plan B. It is *central* to his kingship.

[verse 27 Jesus says] "...it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

- The cross, Good Friday, is not an accident - it's not a collapse after Palm Sunday.
 - It's planned. It's ordained and affirmed from heaven.
 - This is the *very* path the triumphant King is heading all along.
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"Now [Jesus says in verse 31] "is the times for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

- On the cross, three *3 glorious* things happen:(Carson, 442-44):
 - [1] The cross exposes the world for what it is - human rebellion at its worst
 - [2] The cross defeats the prince of the world, Satan. What looks like Satan's triumph is Jesus' fundamental smashing of the evil reign.
 - [3] The cross will also draw the King's people to himself - not just one nation, but all nations: Jews and Gentiles alike; Australians, Indians, Korean, Chinese...
- Now *that's* the true triumph! The brightest glory of Jesus!
- Praise be to our King Jesus - on the cross!

- Friends, now we see:
 - This King is not only *lovely* in private devotion;
 - Not only *majestic* in public praise;
 - He is the King who goes all the way down to our deepest problem - sin, darkness, judgment, and the power of evil - and he deals with it;
 - *by giving himself for you and I!*
 - And there his glory shines the brightest!

That is *why he is worthy of wholehearted devotion!*

Conclusion (12:34-50)

- But John 12 does not end with all understanding Jesus.
 - The crowd is still confused.
 - They want glory without the cross; a king without suffering.
 - And if we're honest, that is what we often want too.
 - So we must take heed to Jesus' **invitation**:
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[in verse 35] Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. 36 **Believe** in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light."

- The King does not call us just to admire, discuss, be impressed by him - but to **BELIEVE in him!**

- John later tells us the tragedy that even after all the signs, many still did not believe. And even among some who did believe, they would not confess Jesus openly - why?
 - because “*they loved human praise more than praise from God*” (John 12:42-43).

- So, here is John 12;
 - Mary shows us - Jesus is worthy of costly love.
 - The crowd shows us - Jesus is worthy of royal praise.
 - The cross shows us - Jesus is worthy of all glory!

- So what will *we* do with this King?
 - Will we love him only when he feels personally comforting and easy?
 - Will we praise him only when he seems to fit our agenda?
 - Will we admire him from a distance, but stop short of faith?
 - Or will we take on the King’s call, come to the light - and **believe in Him?**

As we move toward Good Friday this coming week,

has Jesus triumphantly entered your heart?