

LIFE GROUPS	TEACHING PLAN	
	FW	<i>Study of John</i>
	JULY 11	21

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

JOHN 12:1-50

JULY 11, 2021

TEACHING PLAN

PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying John 12:1-50. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

HIGHLIGHTS

TAKEAWAY: JESUS CAME AS ONE GLORIFIED THROUGH SUFFERING, NOT AS A POLITICAL VICTOR.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: THOSE WHO PLACE THEIR FAITH IN HIM AS HE TRULY IS, AND NOT ONLY AS THEY DESIRE HIM TO BE, WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME BUT RECEIVE THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

GOSPEL CONNECTION: JESUS SHOWED HIS TRUE PURPOSE AND POWER ON THE CROSS.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

Notes:

- 1 When have you held high expectations for an event that turned out to be different than you expected?

- 2 What are some expectations you or others might have about Jesus? How do you respond when you realize that Jesus is not always as you expect Him to be?

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, He received a great reception, but the people misunderstood the purpose of His coming. In a few short days, many of those who cheered Him into the city would also jeer Him out toward the cross. It is important that we accept Jesus as He truly is and not only as we wish Him to be. The truth about Jesus is that He is glorified through what He suffered.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 12:1-11.

Jesus went back to Bethany with His disciples six days before the Passover and His death on the cross. During the meal in Bethany, an extraordinary thing happened. Mary took a pound of fragrant oil, valued at 300 denarii—the equivalent of a man's yearly wage—and used it to anoint Jesus' feet. Mary's heart was a place of complete, simple devotion.

- How did Mary give her best to Jesus?

- What message does Mary's example of extravagant love and unwavering devotion for Jesus hold for believers today?

Notes:

Mary's act of extravagant love was focused on Jesus. Believers, whether in the first century or the twenty-first, keep their focus on Jesus by giving Him the best of who they are and what they have rather than holding back for themselves. By doing so, we show our reverence to Him as Savior and Lord of our lives. Giving our very best to Jesus serves as a testament to the importance of His kingdom and values, not those of this world, our temporary home.

Mary humbled herself by wiping Jesus' feet and displayed great devotion to Him with the expensive fragrant oil. After a display of love came a display of selfishness. Mary's generosity was misunderstood and criticized. The other disciples present at the dinner and Judas voiced their objection to what they perceived as extravagant waste.

- How did Judas respond to the situation? Doesn't Jesus care about the poor and want us to do the same? Explain.
- What was Jesus' response to Mary's anointing Him with costly perfume? Why did Jesus respond in that way? What does this event teach us about approval?

Concern for the poor was not the real motive behind Judas' outburst; greed was. Mary's generosity was less about cost and more about the cross. Jesus' words about the poor did not mean His disciples should think of poverty as inevitable and therefore do nothing. Rather, Jesus meant that believers will always have opportunities to help poor people, but this was Mary's last opportunity to minister to Him before His death.

Mary did not likely realize that Jesus' death was near any more than the disciples did. However, Jesus viewed Mary's actions as a kind of pre-anointing for His death on the cross, His sacrifice that gave humanity a gift unsurpassed by all others.

Notes:

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 12:12-16.

- What did the people testify about Jesus in their praises?
- What do you think the crowds were expecting when they welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem with such fanfare? How did they misunderstand what God had planned for Jesus?
- Considering the fact the crowds and disciples didn't understand what Jesus was planning to do, how He would save them, and that Jesus knew they were all about to turn on Him, why do you think He allowed the celebration to continue as He entered Jerusalem?

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey was the deliberate display of Israel's king coming with God's offer of peace. He was the Son of David, chosen to sit on David's throne. He was the One of whom the prophet Zechariah had spoken. (See Zech. 9:9.) Yet it was no small irony that by using palm branches in their celebration, the people were heralding Jesus as a political king, not the humble Shepherd-King He was portraying Himself as. The palm branch was a significant symbol of military victory for the Jews, which means the people displayed them expecting Jesus to be their political or militaristic king. In chanting, "Hosanna" ("Save now") along with other phrases from Psalm 118, the Jews were using a common patriotic or nationalistic cheer—another affirmation that the Jews looked to Jesus as their political savior.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 12:27-36.

- Do you find it odd that Jesus, of all people, was troubled? Why should one who could heal the sick or raise the dead in any way be troubled?

Notes:

Jesus, alluding to His impending death on the cross, expressed the horror that was gripping His soul. Jesus underwent a crisis moment, but He quickly reminded Himself that it was for this very purpose He came. He knew it was His destiny. As horrible as the reality was in that moment, and as much as He longed to not endure it, He knew it was God's will for Him and He persevered in obedience.

- In what sense was Jesus's death on the cross an act of judgment of the world (v. 31a)?
- According to Jesus, how would His death on the cross affect Satan (v. 31b)? Read Revelation 12:11 for further insight.
- At the end of verse 32, Jesus gave a third impact of His death. What was that? What does it mean? What are the implications for us?

Jesus stated that through His death on the cross, not only would the world be judged and Satan defeated, but people would also be drawn to Him. That is, they would be saved. "All people" cannot mean "every person," since the judgment of others also takes place in the cross. Rather, as the surrounding context and the overall theological emphasis of the Gospel of John demonstrates, "all people" is a reference to all people groups.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 12:37-50.

- Based on this description, what do you think it would have been like to be in the crowd that heard this teaching from Jesus in Jerusalem?
- Why is it surprising that more people did not believe in Jesus? What did John say was the reason for the people's disbelief?
- Why do you think John chose to include the passages from the Book of Isaiah in his description of the people listening to Jesus?

Notes:

Isaiah knew what it was like to preach to an audience with hard hearts. Similar to the Israelites in the Old Testament, these people had rejected God's message and messenger. They had heard the voice of God but did not respond. Therefore, God had hardened their hearts and no longer called out to them.

- How would you summarize Jesus' point in verses 44-50? How is this connected to recognizing that Jesus is glorified through what He suffered?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Notes:

- How have you been challenged by today's study regarding what it means to truly follow Jesus? What needs to change in your life?
- Who in your life might need to hear Jesus' warning this week? What are some ways you might humbly but truthfully extend that warning?
- How can Jesus' authority as seen in John 12 encourage you to boldly share the gospel and the warnings that come along with it?

PRAY

Lead your group in prayer thanking Jesus for His willingness to tell you the truth. Ask for the strength and courage to daily respond to His voice, even when that response requires you to be uncomfortably honest and forthright with those around you.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

Notes:

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
 - When have you faced criticism for seeking Jesus' approval over the approval of people?
 - What does a believer's life look like when he or she is seeking Jesus' approval?

- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.

- > The challenge to memorize John 12:13.

- > The text for next week's study, so group members can read it in anticipation of next weekend: John 13:1-38.

JOHN 12:1-50

Devotion or Death (12:1–11)

This portion of John's Gospel contains a host of important elements. First, there is the devotion of Mary. The perfume used was expensive, a luxury item for herself, selflessly given in devotion to Jesus. That she poured it on the feet of Jesus was an act of humility, for attending to the feet of another person was the work of a servant. Wiping the oil with her hair was also unusual, for respectable women did not unraid their hair in public. Mary exhibited unrestrained love and devotion to Jesus that went against personal cost and concern for perception.

Second, is the deceit and corruption of Judas. This is the sole passage that reveals the wicked character of Judas prior to his betrayal of Jesus. While the author of this Gospel relates Judas's dishonesty in hindsight, at the time Judas must have been highly esteemed, for he was trusted with caring for the money bag. All too often individuals have been able to deceive people regarding their relationship with God, but never is God Himself deceived, for He sees into the very heart of every person.

Third, is the judgment of Jesus on both Mary and the poor. Jesus affirmed Mary's act of devotion and linked it to His own burial. Mary did not intend for this to be the significance of her act, but it was perceived by Jesus in this manner, knowing of the growing shadow of the cross. In discussing the use of the expensive perfume on Himself rather than selling it to assist the poor, Jesus said, "You will always have the poor among you." Unfortunately, many throughout the centuries of Christian history have misinterpreted this statement by Jesus as an excuse to neglect the poor. This was far from the intent of Jesus, who exhibited care and concern for the poor throughout His ministry. The point Jesus was making was that Mary's act of devotion at that particular time and place was worthy of the cost.

Notes:

Praising the King (12:12–19)

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem coincided with the Passover Feast. The palm branches were symbolic and used in celebration of victory. The response of the crowds to Jesus was spectacular. The shout of “Hosanna!” is a Hebrew term meaning save which had become an expression of praise.

Notes:

The Gospel of John emphasizes the royalty of Jesus. Here is the only Gospel that records that the people also shouted, “Blessed is the King of Israel!” The crowd’s exultation, as well as Jesus’ riding a colt, was not seen by the disciples until after His death, burial, and resurrection as the fulfillment of prophecy. This moment, perhaps more than any other, was the high mark of Jesus’ popularity and influence. In only a matter of days, however, the “Hosanna!” would turn to “Crucify him!” (19:15).

The Hour Is Come (12:20–36)

The request of some Greeks to interview Jesus occasioned a lengthy response from Jesus regarding the road that lay before Him. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus had avoided situations that would hasten His death. But now the “hour” had come for “the Son of Man to be glorified.” Jesus’ death and subsequent resurrection is what is in mind by the term “glorified.” Jesus presented Himself as a role model for our perspective on life. Life should not be loved from a temporal perspective but hated as that which represents our sinful separation from God our Creator. This is not, as the life of Jesus demonstrated, a rabid asceticism but an attitude that puts more importance on the world to come.

Jesus understood that His death would bring life to many. Nonetheless, Jesus’ heart was “troubled,” which is all John wrote in relation to the Gethsemane passages of Jesus’ final hours recorded in the Synoptics. Jesus’ troubled heart surely came more from the idea of bearing the weight of the sin of the world as a sinless Being than the mere physical and emotional agony that awaited Him. While Jesus contemplated praying to God for deliverance from that which awaited Him, He remained on the course God had willed for His life.

Not only would Jesus' death offer liberation to men and women from the bounds of sin, but it would bring judgment upon the world and drive the prince of the world from its midst. The cross achieved salvation for those who would believe, brought judgment upon the world for the refusal to believe, and defeated Satan's rebellion once and for all. The lifting up of Jesus on the cross would be the beacon that would draw all persons—meaning without regard to sex, race, social status, or nationality—to Himself for deliverance from sin.

Notes:

God or the World (12:37–50)

How could the Jews have witnessed so many miraculous deeds and remain in unbelief? The answer is found in prophecy. Jews both would not and could not believe. They would not believe when they should have according to what they had witnessed. They could not believe, not because they had freedom of choice removed from them, but because they had purposely rejected God and chosen evil. Thus God turned them over decisively to their choice. Those who had chosen to believe were afraid to make their decision public for fear of excommunication. Even these believers were indicted for caring more for the approval of others than for the approval of God.

What is Jesus' relation to those who reject Him? John made clear that it is not judgment (12:47). It is not that judgment for unbelief will not take place (12:48), only that the primary mission and role of Jesus was not judge but Savior (12:47b). Again, the close relationship between God and Jesus is clearly exhibited in regard to thought and deed (12:44–45, 49–50).

A word should be given regarding the difference between "last day" and "last days." The latter refers to the current period of time, begun when Christ entered the world (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:20; Jude 18). The "last day" (singular), however, refers to the consummation of time and history when the great resurrection and judgment will occur of all persons (1 John 2:18).