

John 12

Theme: Jesus begins the final days of His earthly life. The various reactions of people toward Him then give us some insight into our own reactions toward Him now!

If you knew you had only one more week to live, how would you spend your time? What is really important to you? As we come to John 12, this is the question confronting Jesus, because He knew that He had only six more days to live. He therefore decided to spend His time doing things that He believed to be of utmost importance.

As we look at two of Jesus' final days, including what we call Palm Sunday, we begin to see how people will respond to Him, especially with reference to His death. We are given 6 reactions to Christ. And the 6 responses recorded here give us some insight into our own responses toward Him today.

1. Consider the opening question above: If you knew you had only one more week to live, how would you spend your time?
2. What do you suppose motivated Martha to serve as she did? What should motivate us? See Matthew 20:26, 28.
3. Mary took the most precious thing she had and spent it all on Christ (12:3). What is the most extravagant thing you've ever done for Jesus? Did you ever regret it?
4. After the incident of Mary anointing Jesus, Judas left the home in Bethany and went to Jerusalem to arrange to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. What are some ways that we may be "selling" Jesus today?
5. How did the crowd of people in Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday greet Jesus? What kind of Messiah did these people want? What false expectations about Jesus do people have today?
6. When certain Greeks request to see Jesus (12:20-22), He begins to talk about His coming death on the cross. We cannot understand Jesus apart from the cross. How would you summarize His teaching about it in verses 23-33 to a non-Christian friend? Why is the cross important?
7. How would you summarize the response of the Palm Sunday crowd toward Jesus (see verses 37-41)? By contrast, what is the response of certain leaders (see verses 42-43)?
8. What may we learn from verses 42-50 about the object and the results of true faith?

9. In John 12, as Jesus journeys humbly into Jerusalem to give His life, we see people reacting to Him in several ways. This can give us insight into our own responses toward Him today. Which of these reactions describe your own response to Jesus at this time in your life, and why?

Service – V 1-2

Worship – V 3

Selfish ambition – V 4-8

Convenience – V 9-19

Curiosity – V 20-33

Unbelief/Belief – V 34-50

10. On this first Palm Sunday, Jesus revealed that He was a King, but a different kind from what the people wanted. Are there areas in your life where you need to accept Jesus' rule? Share at least one of those areas with others in your group.
11. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. "

How do we **Die** to bear fruits? How do we **Hate** our life? And why? What will be the outcome?

Group Prayer

As you pray for ongoing needs of those in your group, remember to pray for any personal matters that may have been shared during the discussion, including areas where group members desire to accept Jesus' rule as King.

If You're a Christian, You've Already Died

First, *if you are a Christian, you have already died*. This is not a second or third stage in the Christian life. This is the meaning of becoming a Christian. Becoming a Christian means dying. Here are the key texts:

Galatians 5:24: *Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

Note the tense: if we belong to Christ (that is, if we are true Christians), this is what has happened to us. Our flesh — that old rebellious, unbelieving, self-centered person we were apart from Christ — was crucified. That is, when we put our faith in Christ, we were united to him and what he experienced, we experienced

Romans 6:5: *For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.* His death became our death so that his life might become our life.

Don't panic here, thinking, "Oh, that can't be, I still have some very rebellious, unbelieving, self-centered tendencies." Yes, me too. But do not let your experience become the main authority here. The word of God says, "Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh." That is something we are called to believe and live by.

Or consider the word in **Colossians 3:3:**

You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

This is what happened to you when you became a Christian. This is the meaning of your baptism:

We have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

Becoming a Christian means a decisive death to the old and a newness of life, walking by faith with Christ. Paul put it like this in **Galatians 2:20:**

I am crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

My old unbelieving self died; the me that lives by faith (moment-by-moment) in Christ.

So when I ask myself and you about dying as a means to revival, we must understand that we are not talking about becoming Christians all over again. We are not denying that something glorious has happened to us decisively and already and once for all. It has. We have been joined to Christ by the Holy Spirit and we have died with him and are walking in newness of life in him. Our life is hid with Christ in God. Something eternal and magnificent has happened.

So what am I asking, when I say, "What in me must die that I might be a more fruitful father and husband and pastor? What in us must die as a church for us to be more fruitful?" I said a moment ago that there are two straightforward points. The first was, if you are a Christian, you have already died.