



Part 3:
The Bittersweet Agenda of Jesus
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The Bittersweet Moment of Palm Sunday: John 12

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 putting their faith in him.

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast 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!” ¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written,

¹⁵ “Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey’s colt.”

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 they had done these things to him.

The Sweet: People were coming to see Jesus and his recently resurrected friend Lazarus

The Bitter: The religious crowd, driven by jealousy, planned to kill Jesus and Lazarus

The Sweet: Hosanna !

The Bitter: Crucify him !

²³ Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

The Bitter: Jesus is going to willingly lay down his life and die

The Sweet: In dying, Jesus is going to multiply his saving grace in countless lives

²⁵ The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

The Bitter: We have to die to our “my”

(Continues on back)

The greatest challenge that faces a follower of Jesus is the complete and willing removal of his or her “my”. If I truly want to follow Jesus then my “MY” has to die.

The Sweet: Jesus never asks us to do anything he hasn't done himself

The Ultimate Removal of “My”

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

- Luke 22:41-42

The Bitter: The Father's answer to Jesus' request was “no”

The Sweet: Jesus' response to the “no” was “yet not my will, but yours be done”

The Agenda of Jesus on Palm Sunday

“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!”

- John 12:27-28

On Your Way Home

Make a list of foods or drinks that could be described as bittersweet. What makes Palm Sunday bittersweet for you?

Group Life Discussion Questions



- 1) Do you have any Easter traditions that will occur in the next week? How are you planning on focusing on Jesus through those traditions?
- 2) Have you encountered any bittersweet moments in your recent past? How did you respond to a moment that challenged your faith and your understanding?
- 3) Christians often talk about the need to “die to self.” In what ways did Jesus have to die to himself in order to fulfill his Father's will?
- 4) How does the fact that Jesus got a “no” from his Father affect the way you pray?
- 5) Jesus is talking about physically dying in verses 23-24. What impact does Good Friday have on your spiritual walk and how are you planning on remembering his sacrifice?
- 6) How can we pray for you tonight?