

John: The Word Became Flesh - John 12:12-26

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning church. You guys see the sun is starting to sort of poke out behind the clouds. This is good Go ahead and open turn turn to John chapter 12 We're gonna be looking at verses 12 to 19 this morning And just kind of getting me dialed in I feel really big So a little under the weather, but I don't think it's gonna inhibit me a whole lot But if I cough a little bit I apologize ahead of time It's good to be here this morning and good to begin another week meeting with God's people seeking to worship the Lord together and Why don't we pray and then we'll We'll just dive into our study together. So join me Jesus you are the image of the invisible God firstborn of all creation

By you all things were created in heaven and on earth visible and invisible Thrones dominions rulers and authorities All things were created by you and for you Lord Jesus we are here this morning to worship you you alone Would you meet with us?

We ask that your spirit would move amongst us Lord we want to have hearts that are tender towards your voice Father whatever we need this morning would you provide for us if that's encouragement?

Would you bring that if it's conviction? Might might we be soft towards? Towards your work in us Father remind us of your goodness today. We're thankful that you're on your throne And we're thankful that you are king and we want to worship you now as we come to the text It's in your name. We pray Jesus amen Well things are not always as they seem I took a trip to Russia back in 1999 my first trip there. I took a trip to Russia back in 1999 Russia back in 1999 my first trip there I've taken four or five over the years Taking different college teams to do some some ministry over there and this first trip all I had known it up until this point about Russia was we were in a cold war with them as long as I could

Remember and so they were the great enemy of the USA and I still remember that first trip stepping out of the subway onto the streets in Moscow and just the surrealness of that moment It was really quite unnerving So much so that one of my traveling companions upon hearing a rada tat tat Jump straight into the air believing that we were taking machine gun fire There was no machine gun fire it was just a very loud jackhammer and I suggested to him that maybe the next time he might want to hit the deck And make himself a harder target in the future Things are not always what they appear Well today we're gonna examine a very familiar narrative. It's recorded in every one of the gospels and

[3 : 5 3] I'm actually gonna attempt to dismantle it in terms of What appears to be taking place on the surface? Things are not always as they seen now. I understand that I as I dismantle a story before us In terms of how many have learned it. I also run the risk of destroying a very happy childhood memory for some of you of waving palm branches and singing Hosanna So yes, we are actually a day two weeks late to come to this passage we just celebrated Resurrection Sunday last week and I was confiding with Scott Earlier this week as we come to this text on how we couldn't time it a little bit better And I was saying we can go one of two ways here with the congregation We can either tell them that we're very clever and we meant to do this or just admit that we're deeply flawed I'm gonna go with we're really clever

And tell you that we're just gonna rewind the story a little bit Slow down the story if you will and look at passion week and slow motion which actually is what the gospel of John Does how am I doing Scott? I think they're buying it John actually takes this final week of Jesus's life and and Chapter 12 to 21 deal with it half his gospel is given to this final week In terms of the gospels as a whole there are 89 chapters with all four gospels together 29 of them deal with the final week so the about a third of the gospel materials deal with this final week in the life of Jesus and so we will just Begin this and be in this week for a good stretch here beginning this morning. So let's begin and look at

verse 12 together John writes the next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem so we have our setting here says the next day, but let's back up a step here

Because the day prior Jesus had spent it with some close friends there in Bethany this Town just two miles east of Jerusalem. He's there with Mary and Martha and Lazarus There's a dinner party being thrown for Jesus perhaps celebrating that that Jesus rose Lazarus from the grave a couple months prior On this evening we recall that that Mary annoys Jesus's feet this this wonderful expression of extravagant worship That she undertakes and and we also recall that Judas a scary it he gets bent out of shape Sort of revealing the darkness in his heart that that Mary would waste this expensive perfume on Jesus And he's not the only one bent out of shape There's others that have come to investigate him further if we We just retrace some of our steps here in verses 9 to 11 John writes when the large crowd of Jews learned that Jesus was there they came not only on account of him

But also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead verse 10 So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well Because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus So how incensed This one have to be so deluded in their heart these religious leaders that they had they had become So despicable in the in the intent the behavior that they wanted to undertake They wanted to kill a man because too much attention was being given to Jesus Man if people if they they recall the Jews raised Lazarus from the from the dead There's gonna be this groundswell of a support of interest in Jesus And so they're thinking about doing really the unimaginable to hang on to the life that they had known This good life this life of power of influence of prestige being an insider And what a fool's quest right?

Hey, let's put Lazarus to death well Pretty obvious like Jesus already raised him from the grave once think you could pull it off a second time But as the story goes it is now the next day So it is now Sunday of passion week And it says here in verse 12 that a large crowd had come to the feast Now what feast are we talking about here church it is Passover right Passover it's also Connected with the the feast of unleavened bread. It's a springtime feast of the big three pilgrimage Feast we know that there is Passover Pentecost and tabernacles And if you want to read about those Each in one chapter Deuteronomy 16 describes each of those and how to celebrate them In terms of what the Old Testament Jews participated in

[9 : 16] Passover was a celebration to commemorate Israel's deliverance From bondage in Egypt It was a political deliverance And as we recall if we know our Bibles God sent ten plagues to Egypt to deal with This people that was not releasing Israel and and then on the final plague The death of the firstborn Both man and livestock would occur unless Blood from a year old lamb without defect Was painted on the doorposts and you can read about that in Exodus chapter 12 If blood is there when the angel of death passes over Or we get the name Passover from then that child would be spared And so we see that everything really in this Old Testament of our Bibles points forward towards Jesus

That in Exodus 12 that Israel is told to find a lamb without defect and then What does Peter the Apostle say in first Peter 1 19 talking about Jesus?

He says hey with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot So we see Jesus is that lamb that satisfies God's righteousness and God's wrath passes over us if we are in Christ That is why Jesus is the only name that we come and we celebrate come Sunday morning. Amen Amen We're with us. All right, very good. You're with me. So Jesus He's close to Jerusalem The evening before you enjoy this meal with his friends there in Bethany and now it's Sunday and he's making the two-mile walk I have a little map to Maybe a line us here. We can see the the route that Jesus took just east of Jerusalem about a two-mile journey through Beth page and then They're entering into the city and if we could imagine this this route this would have been Either in the same place or very close to the the wilderness where Jesus was tempted and As he's heading towards the cross here on this Sunday morning, he could have turned around at any moment You ever think about that?

Our king could have opted not to take that walk And you just have to wonder What was he meditating on? What was he thinking about as he made this journey towards Jerusalem taking this if you will this green mile?

[12 : 05] Well scripture actually gives us a clue Because we read in Hebrews 12 verses 1 and 2 it says let us run with endurance the race that is set before us looking to Jesus The founder and

perfecter of our faith who for the joy That was set before him endured the cross For the joy that was set before him and and you have to believe that that wasn't just You know that Friday when he was crucified, but it began this Sunday morning Crucified, but it began this Sunday and no doubt before then but what is the joy?

And perhaps this is a little bit lofty of a thought for us this morning But at least a portion of that joy you have to wonder could that have been us Could have we even been in the mind of Christ? 2,000 years ago That that he's thinking about those that would come to know him that would come to worship him Extravagantly just like Mary had done the night before And you have to wonder to he draw encouragement on This most difficult journey even imagining a group of believers here in 2024 here at 4th Memorial who are seeking to love him serve him enjoy him It's a wonderful thought And maybe you're like well Jay you're making Jesus a little too human. No, no, no, he was fully man The gospel is deeply personal to us but also to God amen Let's go on verse 13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him crying out Hosanna

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord even the king of Israel So this miracle of of Lazarus of raising him from the grave it's fresh in their minds and we saw that from verse 9 word travels Folks are talking there's a buzz Oh this guy this guy Jesus the guy that raised Lazarus this could be him This could be the Messiah this could be the king that we have been waiting for And it says here that that that there was a crowd and and it was a large crowd and and they went out to meet him before he even gets to the city People come and they find Jesus and church the city is packed Some scholars estimate that maybe you know Jerusalem in this day there would have been maybe around 50,000

Residents and that could have swelled on these feast occasions to 1 million Josephus the the ancient historian he actually Remarks on Passover around 65 AD said there were 2.7 million So just imagine this this small city just swelling people everywhere and it says there's a large crowd That goes out to find Jesus So this is the scene here He's heading into the city and you have these many people around palms waving and The synoptics the other gospels actually talk about that people were laying garments down before him to walk on and people are crying out Hosanna This is the king. This is the guy And what I want us to note here is from the outside it looks really good Right it's sort of like when your family shows up Sunday morning, right and you look really good [16 : 03] We just didn't see what you were like in the vehicle on the drive over Sometimes we present better than we are I Recall driving an employee from one of the large online retailers that you all shop at When I was in Seattle and they told me man everything that's outward facing looks amazing, but internally We're a mess We're many of us are on the verge of like just like a meltdown emotionally like the hours and the chaos and So things things present well on this day. It looks great from the outside Things look like they're going very well. It's a healthy scene And yet what has always confused me even as a kid is like what happened?

Like what happened on this Sunday? Where everybody is thrilled that Jesus has arrived To then just a few days later where they're yelling crucify him I know there's some scholars that want to suggest that there's two different crowds. I just have a hard time Buying that it says here man. There's a large crowd. There's many that are here And they're celebrating Jesus What happened? And I would say the words on this day were good The words are good, but their meaning was pregnant with wrong expectations Because Hosanna Translates save us now Save us now rescue us free us But they're thinking free us Not from the bondage of sin free us from those filthy Romans Who under the general the Roman general poppy conquered Jerusalem in 63 BC It is Pompey not Pompeii as we all like to say But they're like save us Save us like you did from the Egyptians 1500 years ago Hosanna blessed as he who comes in the name of the Lord

Even the king of Israel and and here the crowd is quoting from Psalm 118 specifically verses 25 and 26. This is a Hallel Psalm Hallel Translates praise and these these Psalms Psalm 113 to 100 18 these are the Hallel Psalms And they became associated with Passover as they contain references to Israel's deliverance from Egypt And so they're saying yes, the king is here. What sort of king do they want church?

They want a political king They want to be emancipated from the tyranny of Rome Even the waving of these palms these date palm branches This was a symbol of national identity for them See roughly 200 years prior During the 400 silent years if you will between Malachi and John the Baptist There was a Greek king a guy by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes He was a solicit king of the solicited empire and he ruled and that empire ruled Jerusalem from 200 to 160 BC and He wanted

to increase he wanted to Hellenize Israel at that time. He wanted to see the Greek culture flourish and so we outlawed the Jewish dietary laws He was a despicable arrogant leader in fact his name Antiochus Epiphanes he took that for himself epiphanes means God manifest or [20 : 11] The illustrious one The Jews had their own nickname for him. They called him Antiochus epimenees Meaning not the illustrious one, but rather the mad one He is most famous for seeking to erase the Jewish culture in that day first seeing Jews to worship Zeus and his most brazen act Was storm in the temple in 167 BC and desecrating the altar by sacrificing a pig on it to Zeus He is a pre figure or a shadow of the future Antichrist the Jesus talks about that will come and in Matthew 24 15 talking about this abomination of desolation yet Future but but Antiochus epiphanes is certainly a type of Antichrist here and The Jewish response to this was to take up arms We're gonna fight We're gonna fight this Syrian Greek army and

This series of revolts is known as the Maccabean revolt during that intertestamental time And it was led by this warrior priest a guy by the name of Judas Mac Maccabeus Judas the hammer Judas Maccabeus took back Jerusalem took back the temple rededicated in 164 BC And as you recall that that dedication of the temple was already talked about in the Gospel of John and John 10 verse 22 and that is actually the modern-day celebration of Hanukkah the Feast of Dedication Judas dies before full independence is gained from the Greeks, but his brother Simon Accomplishes this feat and how did Israel celebrate?

Well, it's recorded in the Maccabees verse Maccabee 13 It says Simon entered Jerusalem with a chorus of praise and the waving of palm branches You see the connection here this is what's in the minds of Israel on this day This is what they're thinking about for Israel on this day Jesus was walking towards Jerusalem They're waving Paul the sign of liberation not peace Even the palm was even minted on coins of this era and it became this national symbol of independence And so at its core these folks they're demanding Jesus do what for them?

Liberate us Jesus politically There's no concept of need for deliverance from a greater tyranny and upon their lives I'm thinking about sin and and death this crowd They wanted liberation from Rome In fact this crowd didn't actually want Jesus The Son of God The one who came to transform hearts they wanted their own idea of Jesus a Jesus that would do their bidding And maybe the central question for all of us this morning is as has really been said This morning his as has really much changed in 2000 years What sort of Jesus Do we want today Do we want the Jesus of politics I mean church culture is insane

It's godless This this day in which we live it's It's hard to process sometimes That we're actually getting to the point where we've got a we've got to argue that two and two actually equal four or not five It's it's insane I want the Jesus of politics But Jesus stopped rescuing sinners just she'll just smoke them all We sound a little bit like the sons of thunder there don't we you recall and Luke 9 40 54 the disciples James and John they they saw the Samaritan city They reject that rejected Christ and they said Lord do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?

[24 : 42] Some days that's what we want Jesus to be Last Sunday it was Easter. I pulled in the parking lot I had three of my family members were coming in into the into the church building. There's a guy that pulls up in a Kind of a beat up old Cherokee and rolls the window down and starts barking at us and and he's like this a church and I was like Kind of taking back. Oh, yeah, it's a church. You know, I was like come on in and then he started just he was creative Skilled in the way that he strung words together And Apparently I had done something to offend him and I honest I have no idea what I did and But he just was ranting and ranting and I was like wow I'm just like I'm just like At that moment, I didn't want to look at him and say he has risen I had other words in my heart Some days I want the political Jesus

That Judas Maccabeus type Jesus Or maybe we we want the Jesus without cost Man the Jesus that's okay with my sin You know willing to offer me heaven Will I remain token in my affections for him?

That's the Jesus I want Saturday before Easter I was out driving I was trying to pass out invitations for our service and Got a 82 year old gal in my car and I was thinking oh she seems nice and this is gonna be great I'm gonna give her an invitation so I just asked I said hey, what are you doing tomorrow?

I was hoping she'd be like oh just nothing so I could invite her. She's like well, I'm singing in my choir And I'm thinking well well now we're gonna get to fellowship. I said really where do you go? Well, I go to the church. That's okay with you being a homosexual I was like oh Okay, and then she

just listed off like all the reasons why Jesus is okay with homosexuality It was only like a three-minute ride so there was not much of a conversation that took place there But that's growing in our culture we want we want Jesus without cost I don't want a Jesus that wants to that wants to change my life It wants to sort of refashion me transform me Just like what Paul says in 1st Corinthians 6:11 right such were some of you You did all sorts of things in rebellion to God, but he's transforming you and now you're different Or maybe we want the Jesus of of comfort right the one that will keep us from suffering Man, I want the Jesus that's gonna give me health. He's gonna bless my investments

Maybe I'll get even a little fame You know Got a little bit of a following. It's not just my mom liking my posts these days, right?

[27 : 52] Not the world to applaud me speak well of me. That's the Jesus I want Well, here's the thing church Jesus If we're there is gonna let all of us down And in fact, I believe that Jesus disappoints everyone on the way that he chose them To make his entrance into Jerusalem on this particular Sunday Let's read about it. Look at verses 14 and 15 Says in Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it just as it is written Fear not daughter of Zion behold your king is coming sitting on a donkey's colt So here we have church here in verse 15 If you're not odors of Jerusalem behold your king is coming sitting on a donkey's colt This is a fulfillment of a 500 year old prophecy from Zachariah 9:9 There's over 300 prophecies fulfilled in the person of Christ the bible is a book like none other church. It's remarkable It's scary in some regard

There's prophecies that have come to fruition and in fact even further back from the pages of Genesis we see imagery Of what this day holds as Jacob blesses his son Judah Jesus being from the lion of Judah the lion of Judah it says in Genesis 49:11 It says actually binding his fall to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine And he says he's going to be the king of the vine Binding his fall to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine He has washed his garments in wine and his vesture his vesture his robe in the blood of grace And it's interesting that there's a blessing all the way back to the pages of Genesis Jacob has for Judah related to donkey and a donkey's colt and I believe there's connection here pointing actually to christ and this particular day And this prophecy here on this day that what they're chanting daughter of Zion That's the hill in which Jerusalem sits. It's referring to folks who live there. And so the really essentially

What what God is saying is hey fear not Jerusalem your king's here Your king's arrived Just not the king that you were asking for What do they want church?

What does Israel? Desperately want what does Israel want? What are the expectations in their heart on this particular day? They want their culture back Oh, man, if we could just get our culture back They want to kick out the the evil politician that's in office on that day This could sound like maybe some in our day and age Man pilot throwing the governor hered up in Galilee Tiberius in Rome like we want him gone They want Jesus to show up in the in the form of Judas Maccabeus. They want a hero That scene from gladiator when comatose enters into Rome if you've seen the film most of you men have seen it multiple times I'm not going to say it's a spiritual discipline, but you know what I'm saying and You see comatose coming in and he's on a chariot. He's there war horses and and he's in his regal armor and there's crowds

There's trumpets and there's celebration and there's fanfare and and it's like the king even though he was pretty pathetic It's like the just the picture of it That's the sort of Jesus that we want, but what did they get?

[31 : 30] Well, it says here John records they got a king Sitting on a donkey's colt Like Jesus wasn't even sitting on a donkey like he took it a step further. He's sitting on a donkey's colt You guys aren't donkey experts. I guess it's that's a baby donkey Is there any donkey experts in?

Well, I happen to be one you probably didn't know that It's shocking though that Jesus is is riding like the smaller of the two in Matthew 21 It says he says go into the village in front of you and immediately you'll find a donkey tied in a colt with her Untied them and bring them to me bring them Matthew's the only gospel that talks about bringing both mom and baby And then he's going to the church and he's going to the church and he's going to the church and he's going to the church and baby Maybe the baby needs mom in front to keep courage But Jesus instructs the disciples to go to Beth page on the way to Jerusalem there from Bethany retrieve the donkey and the baby donkey And that's what Jesus rides into the city church donkeys are not fierce animals They're not Like I said, I'm a donkey expert. We have we actually have a that's ours um We've arrived We have arrived

That is our own personal donkey doesn't everybody have one um We didn't name him killer He's not the spaniard, right? We didn't kill him, you know call him fang We called him an appropriate name his name's Olaf And he loves warm hugs There is a least fierce animal to ride in on There's no pop there's There's not a humbler animal that you could arrive on And it's shocking because that's the animal The Jesus chose the god almighty chose that's the picture I want you to have of Jesus He's the donkey king Truly What was Jesus communicating

By riding in on a donkey Well, he was saying hey, I'm not like Alexander the great I'm not here for war I'm actually here for peace I'm here for peace And if you read the prophecy in zacharia 9 it actually goes on in verse 10 To explain some of this he says hey, I will cut off the chariot from effray him the warhorse from Jerusalem And the battle bow shall be cut off and he shall speak peace to the nations Not just peace for Jerusalem Not just peace for america peace for the nations And his rule shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth Yeah, the world doesn't quite get Jesus see in in in our world we we lead through power We lead through coercion and might and yet our god's leadership style is what church?

It's humility It's humility He's the humble king There's no sword There's a basin there's a towel and then ultimately there was a cross And if that's who our king is who ought his people be?

[35 : 32] How are we to lead? He took the form of a servant It wasn't fury it wasn't anger on this day it was kindness it was humility it was quite unexpected And I would say that's how we're to it's how we're to be as his people Is there a growing humility in the way that we do life?

specifically men right is that how we we lead in our homes? Willing and joyful to serve Without thought of benefit to us or does every act of service have a price tag associated with it?

We serve but there's there's anger in there My dad was he struggled with anger and it was under the surface, but it would it would it would show itself And I've inherited that And this has been a prayer of mine For years lord. I don't want to I don't want to be an angry dad An angry father an angry husband lord Sanctify me in this area. It's continued. It's continually a prayer Because by nature I want to fight So I have the Agnes dance why there's a not promoting tattoos this morning Not sanctioning don't go out and do this, but there's a sheep here It's a lamb because that's how Jesus led and that's how I need to lead. That's how we need to lead And he sets a wonderful example for us on this particular day humble Jesus

Died to self to offer us life Humility humble and that's our example Well, let's continue look at verse 16 Since his disciples did not understand these things at first See everybody's confused everybody's like what?

But when Jesus was glorified then they remember that these things had been written about him And had been done to him How do we know the the crowd misunderstood?

[38 : 02] I thought Jesus was going to be this political savior. Well a couple ways first his disciples missed it as well Things clicked after his resurrection. That's what Zachariot. That's who he was writing about And then we also know the crowd missed what was going on because There's a scene that we're not privy to in this narrative, but in Luke 19. We see it verse 41 It says when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it saying Would that you even you had known on this day the things that make for peace?

But now they are hidden from your eyes So Jesus weeps before entering into the city He knows why he's there I'm not here to liberate you politically I'm here to liberate you from a more necessary evil that you don't even see I'm here to transform your hearts I'm here to give you life. I'm here to take away the power of death forever It's much bigger But look at verse 17 to the end here says the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and Raised him from the dead continued to bear witness The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they had heard he had done this sign So the Pharisees said to one another you see

That you are gaining nothing Look the world has gone after him Religious leaders there we're losing power. We're freaking out But here's the irony of the scene church The Pharisees Pharisees they're all lathered up like man this crowd. They're celebrating Jesus They're they're gonna follow Jesus, but in reality Everyone on this day missed it Because We want a different Jesus See God's perfect humble lamb Entered Jerusalem on this day and it was the perfect day church for him to enter See this day in which Jesus entered this Sunday before Passover This was known as lamb selection selection day

In Exodus 12 Verse 3 Israel was told hey on this first Passover. Hey take a lamb According to your father's house a lamb for the household and then later on in in Exodus 12 verse 6 says now a few

days later 14 of the month Then slaughter this lamb so Sunday would have been lamb selection day Thursday They would have slaughtered the Passover lamb But this Sunday that Jesus walks into Jerusalem this Sunday was the day that the Jewish shepherds would annually herd these huge flocks For Passover into Jerusalem Which signaled the beginning of the Passover celebration And there was sheep everywhere Josephus actually records that there was 250 roughly Thousand lamb slaughtered at Passover quarter of a million Lams I just want us to have the scene on this day that Jesus walks into Jerusalem thousands of lambs entering the city on this particular day You can hear them the bleating of the sheep everywhere And yet the one lamb God's lamb That Israel should have recognized was hidden in plain sight And they missed him they missed him And it's tragic And I think the central question for all of us today What sort of Jesus are we looking for?

[42 : 21] Jesus didn't come to conquer nations. He came to conquer hearts and minds To transform hearts and minds your heart My heart God's perfect lamb Without spot spot Or blemish And church that's actually where the joy is found and I'll end with This testimony, but I still remember the transforming power of christ Over my friend I mentioned last week kip coach kip Where his life was just a mess He was out of control. He was he was as angry a man as you would ever meet Lust filled as you would ever meet

There was just a stench to his life and in his heart and he came to faith in christ And you saw for the first time joy that was present But it took him humbling himself and crying out for his need for a savior And that's how it works And I love the fact that we have a god Who modeled that who modeled humility for us?

He's like my kingdom is going to advance in a different way And as we humble our hearts to him His kingdom continues to grow and advance as well. Amen Father thank you for this Record of how you began passion week 2000 years ago Jesus we We don't always get you Understand how you Just have turned everything on its head That you're humble in a way that that the world doesn't understand or know That you had the power of heaven At your fingers and yet lord You chose the humble path From the very beginning The way you chose to enter into our world In a small town In a manger Testifying the shepherds And now here at the end of your earthly life There's no pomp or circumstance Just a humble beast of burden riding into a city And people missed you and lord I pray that that that would not be so of us That we would understand who you are. We would allow you to be who you are in our lives King Humble king and lord I pray that there would be a spirit of humility That would be would be growing in each of us Lord i'm so thankful that you modeled this humility And lord for us some of us that may be struggle in the area of pride or or anger We want to confess those sins to you this morning lord jesus We don't want to be those type of leaders. We want to we want to follow our king Want to emulate your heart To those first closest to us and then to the world around us Lord jesus we worship you today and forever and it's in your name. We pray amen