

# God's Chosen King

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[0:00] The reading is taken from John chapter 12, verses 1 to 33. We invite you to follow along on page 898 in the Bible under the chairs in front of each row.

! That's page 898. Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at the table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair.

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, he who was about to betray him, said, Why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?

He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

[1:29] Jesus said, Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.

When the large crowd of the 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.

So the chief priest 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.

The next day, the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 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. And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion.

[2:41] Behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt. His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.

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 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. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.

So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip went and told Andrew.

Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, The awe has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

[3:59] But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this awe. But for this purpose, I have come to this awe.

Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. The crowd that stood there, and heard it said, that this, that it had thundered, others said, an angel had spoken to him.

Jesus answered, this voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

[5:11] And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

This ends the reading. Thank you for reading, Cleo. I'm sure we've all had the experience of dealing with people who thought they really knew us based on being familiar with us.

But in time, it was revealed that they really didn't know us based on what they asked of us or based on what they expected from us.

They asked us to do things that we would never do. They expected us to do things that wouldn't even cross our minds. Demonstrating that they really never knew us.

Because had they known us, they wouldn't expect that of us. They would not ask that of us. And sometimes, our unwillingness to accede to what they expect or what they request leads to even greater misunderstanding.

[6:28] Sometimes it leads to offense. And I've counseled with enough people to know that there are people who actually believe that most people misunderstand them.

Most people don't really know them. They would say, people just misunderstand me. But the most misunderstood person in all of human history, whom people thought they knew and whom people still think they know, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. And many in his day didn't know him. And many today who claim to know him do not truly know him.

In the beginning of his account of the gospel, John, in chapter 1, verses 9 to 11, he writes these words about Jesus.

The true light, which he has light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through him.

[7:48] Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own and his own people did not receive him. When John says that the world did not know Jesus, he wasn't talking about the physical world.

He was talking about the world of human beings. Those created by Jesus who didn't know him. And John tells us in fact that Jesus even came to his own people.

To his relatives, to his family members. And John says he came to his own people and they didn't receive him. Not that they did not know that he was Jesus and what child he was in the family.

They knew all that about him. But John says they didn't receive him. They didn't receive him as he truly was because they didn't know him as he truly was.

And even when large crowds flocked after Jesus during his earthly ministry, including the crowd that flocked after him on Palm Sunday, they still didn't know who Jesus was.

[9:04] They flocked to him not because of who he was. They flocked to him because of who they thought he was and what they thought he came to do for them.

And brothers and sisters, 2,000 years later, not much has changed. Many people are still coming to Jesus not for who he truly is, but for who they wrongly think he is and what they wrongly think he came to do for them.

And so on this Palm Sunday morning, I want us to consider this first account of Palm Sunday recorded by the Apostle John because in the midst of this account, in the midst of the crowd's misunderstanding, John helps us to see who Jesus truly was.

And by God's grace this morning, I want us to see about Jesus what the shouting crowd actually missed.

Let me take a moment to pray and ask the Lord to do that for us. Heavenly Father, we bow our hearts in this moment and we ask that you would do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

[10:35] Heavenly Father, you're the only one who can reveal the Son. We have no ability in and of ourselves to know the biblical Jesus.

But indeed, people who walked where he walked. People who sat and heard him teach didn't know who he was.

The Lord removed some 2,000 years after we find ourselves in even a greater disadvantage left to ourselves to know the biblical Jesus.

So Lord, would you draw near as we open your word this morning, open our eyes to the biblical Jesus and cause us to know him better or cause us to come to know him for the first time.

We ask that you would do this. In Jesus' name. Amen. I think it's fair to say that all the gospel writers, the four gospel writers, had one name.

[11:53] And when you look at the four gospel accounts, you have four men coming from four different angles, but they all have one name. And it's a threefold name.

First, they wanted their readers to know who Jesus was, his identity. And second, they wanted their readers to know why Jesus came, his mission.

And then third, they wanted their readers to know what it means to follow Jesus, his message. That is the common denominator between the four gospel writers, though they come at that from different angles.

They all wanted their readers to know the identity, the mission, and the message of the man who hung on that middle cross on Calvary's Hill.

And so they all culminated that very point. They culminate their gospel writings in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And they are careful as they work to that to try to reveal who this man really was.

[13:21] And this morning as we commemorate Palm Sunday, we come face to face with this threefold purpose in this account of the first Palm Sunday.

Sunday. I want to consider this threefold purpose of Jesus from this account in our remaining time.

First, we see in this Palm Sunday account of John the identity of Jesus. In verse one, John tells us that Jesus came to the town of Bethany six days before the Passover, which would have been on a Saturday, because the Passover began on Friday at sunset.

And then in verse 12, John tells us that the next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

So if Jesus came into Bethany on that Saturday, the next day would have been that Sunday. And here in verse 12, we have the beginning of this account of what happened on that first Palm Sunday.

[14:50] In verse 13, John tells us that the large crowd that had come to the feast of Passover took palm branches and ran out to meet Jesus crying out Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the king of Israel.

Now it's quite obvious that this was no random act. This was no spontaneous act that this large crowd pulled off in a moment.

what is clear is that this was intentional and this was coordinated. The Jewish historian Josephus, some 30 years after Jesus had triumphantly entered Jerusalem, tells us that at one particular Passover, some 2.7 million people had gathered, 30 years after Jesus would have rode into Jerusalem.

2.7 million people 30 years later had gathered in Jerusalem for Passover. Now if just half that crowd, if just half that crowd 30 years later had been in Jerusalem, that would have been a massive crowd of people in Jerusalem on the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

Jerusalem. So why did this crowd decide that they would take palm branches above all the other trees that were available for them to grab a branch from and follow Jesus?

[16:35] Why palm branches? And of all the words that they could have uttered to Jesus in praise to him, why did they choose these words?

Why did they shout Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the king of Israel? Well, not to these questions correctly, we need to know a bit of Jewish history.

The nation of Israel was under the oppression of the Romans. Rome occupied them, Rome ruled them.

And one of the ways that the Jews managed through this time of oppression and occupation of the Romans was they held on to and they maintained hope in the promise in God's word that one day he was going to send a messiah, he was going to send a king who was going to be their ruler and their deliverer.

That was their hope that they held on to as they lived under Roman rule and oppression. And even though the messiah in scripture that was promised was not a political ruler, not a political deliverer, over time this hope of this coming messiah morphed into a political messiah, a political ruler, a political king who would one day come and who would deliver them from Roman oppression.

[18:08] Over time as they waited, that's what the general understanding of this messiah who was going to come had become.

And clearly this large crowd that went out to meet Jesus, that's the messiah that they went out to meet. John tells us that Jesus was really, he was the ideal messiah, he had raised Lazarus from the dead.

He tells us that in verse 11, he says that it was on account of Lazarus, that the large crowd had gone out to meet Jesus and they were believing in Jesus.

He tells us in verses 17 and 18 that there were, the large crowd that was present when he raised Lazarus from the dead, that they were present when he rode into Jerusalem.

And they continued to testify and to talk about what Jesus had done. Surely if you could raise the dead, you could overthrow the Romans. The first indication that this crowd saw in Jesus the political messiah that they so desperately wanted was the fact that they chose palm branches above all the other trees they could have selected branches from.

[19:34] And they were greeting him with these palm branches because the palm had become to be recognized as a political symbol in the nation of Israel.

It was a symbol of Jewish nationalism. The palm was on their coins and they used it when they were revolting against Roman rule.

people. And even though the Romans put down the revolution and they recognized this palm as a galvanizing force of nationalism among them and tried to snuff it out, the palm still made its way back on the Jewish coins.

And then they sung Hosanna to Jesus. Hosanna means give salvation now. It's a literal translation of Hosanna.

Give salvation now. And the salvation that they had in mind was salvation from Roman oppression and Roman rule. And what better time to bring that salvation than at Passover which commemorated the liberation of God's people from Egyptian rule and slavery.

[21:00] What a wonderful time it would be to now liberate them from Roman rule. They also said, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And this is a direct quotation from Psalm 118 verse 26. It was a psalm that was sung at the time of Passover as well. there's a psalm that sang about the coming Messiah.

But there's a part of what they said to Jesus on that first Palm Sunday that is not in Psalm 118 verse 26. The part even the king of Israel that was added.

And was added because that was their understanding of this Messiah who they were singing about and this Messiah who they were expecting. Not knowing his true identity, they thought that Jesus was this political deliverer and king.

But that's not who Jesus was. And so in verse 14, in response to this palm-waving, Hosanna-shouting crowd who misunderstood his identity, John tells us that Jesus does something that was highly unusual and even astonishing to the crowd.

[22:30] In verse 14 we read that Jesus found a donkey. He found a donkey and he sat on it. Now this is a very deliberate act of Jesus.

The other three gospel writers tell us that Jesus assigned two of his disciples to go into the town and to find a young donkey and to bring it back to him.

He didn't send for a horse, although horses would have been the preferred animal to ride on, because that's what kings did. Kings rode on horses and in chariots.

But Jesus commissioned these two disciples. He said, you go into the town and I want you to find this young donkey, this young colt, whom no one had ever ridden on, and you to bring him back to me.

And so Jesus receives this clumsy colt, and Jesus sits on this colt. And it's quite an odd thing, because here's Jesus, he walks all the way to Jerusalem, why all of a sudden does he need an animal to ride on as he has arrived?

[23:47] Jerusalem. And in particular, why would he request not just any animal, but this one, this colt on whom no one had ever sat?

To really understand what's going on here, we need to see verses 14 and 15 together. So look again at what it says. And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it.

Just imagine the scene. What we see is that John does not record any words of Jesus in response to the crowd and the palm waving and the Hosanna shouting that they showered upon him.

Instead, he intentionally, John says, he found a 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.

John tells us that Jesus did this to fulfill the prophecy about the Messiah. Indeed, as a reminder to the crowd of the kind of Messiah that he was and the kind of kingdom that he represented.

[25:18] This word Zion is a word that refers to God's people. And this prophecy that we find here in verses 14 to 15, this is a prophecy from Zechariah 9, verse 9, where God spoke to his people through the prophet Isaiah when he was prophesying about the Messiah, about the king who was going to come to them, who was no ordinary king.

And so in calling for this colt and sitting on it, in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, Jesus was showing his true identity to this crowd.

He was showing this crowd that he was God's king. It's helpful to look at the full quotation from Isaiah 9, 9, because the full quotation doesn't find its way in John's account.

And here's what it says. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you righteous, and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This is God's king. Although John doesn't record, again, any words spoken by Jesus, this act of Jesus spoke volumes.

[26:54] This act of Jesus spoke loudly in the ears of those who were gathered. By finding this donkey, by sitting on this donkey to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy, Jesus, by his actions to them, and by extension to us, is saying to us, the kingdom I've come to bring is not an earthly political kingdom.

It doesn't advance through military might like the kingdoms of this world. I am a king, but not a king of this world. My exaltation is in my humility.

My strength is in my weakness. My might is in my meekness. Brothers and sisters, this act of Jesus finding and sitting on a donkey is telling us that his kingship and his kingdom represented was represented more by a humble king on a donkey, which is a symbol of servanthood,!

than a proud king on a horse, which is a symbol of privilege and war. That's the true identity of Jesus that we see revealed on that first Palm Sunday.

He was God's chosen king. And Zechariah, he says it so profoundly. He says, daughter of Zion, your king. Your king is different.

[28:36] But they wanted a king like all the other kings around them. And so that was what they were looking for. That was what they were expecting. And brothers and sisters, his identity on that day remains his identity to this day.

This is the biblical Jesus. This is the biblical Jesus. But in this account, not only do we see the identity of Jesus, we also see the mission of Jesus.

What was his mission? why did Jesus come? It was a mission that the crowd was not interested in. In fact, it was a mission that his own disciples were not interested in.

The gospel writers record for us that the disciples thought that he came to bring an earthly kingdom, that they were jockeying for a position, that they were arguing among themselves who was going to sit on the right and who was going to sit on the left.

they viewed his kingdom as one that would have positions of authority in the earth. But that was not the kingdom that he came to bring.

[29:55] That was not his mission. In this account, Jesus refers to his mission by this term, the hour. First in verse 23, and then in verse 27.

Look again into the context for how Jesus says this, starting in verse 20. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.

So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida, in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip went and told Andrew, Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

And Jesus answered them, The owl has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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. It appears that Philip and Andrew were very impressed that the Greeks wanted to see Jesus.

[31:09] The Greeks told Philip, we would like to see Jesus, and Philip doesn't go to Jesus. Philip goes to Andrew. He says, Andrew, these Greeks want to see Jesus.

And Andrew doesn't say to Philip, well, go tell Jesus. Andrew and Philip go to Jesus, and they say to Jesus, the Greeks want to see you. And to appreciate this, you have to understand that in those days, the Greeks were the epitome of wisdom.

To be known as a Greek in those days was to be known as a person of status, and even if you didn't know anything, once you were a Greek, you were just a stem generally. And so, Philip from Bethsaida, a nondescript town, has these Greeks coming to him saying, we want to see Jesus. He's very impressed, and he goes to Jesus with Andrew. Clearly, Jesus was not impressed. Jesus, evidently, saw it as a distraction from fulfilling his mission that was a mere five days away.

This hour that he refers to, his mission is wrapped up in this hour. His mission was his approaching death on the cross. and Jesus likens his death to a grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying and as a result bearing much fruit.

[32:43] In verse 23, Jesus refers to his death as his hour to be glorified. But the glory that Jesus had in mind is not the way we think about glory.

The glory that Jesus had in mind brought agony to his soul. Look at what he says in verse 27. He says, Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?

Father, save me from this hour? For this purpose I have come to this hour. This was his mission. This is why he was born. He was born for this hour.

And this hour was for him to die. And so we see the agony of Jesus' mission. He's in such great agony that he raises the question whether he should ask the Father to save him from this hour that had come and was staring him in the face.

But with unflinching resolve, he declared, But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name. Why does Jesus say, Father, glorify your name?

[34:10] Jesus say, Father, glorify your name? God, he says that because in his approaching death, which God himself was bringing about, God would glorify himself in his son.

the father had already glorified himself in the son's living, and now he was about to glorify himself in the son's dying.

Because his son's death was like a grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, and as a result of dying was going to bring forth an abundance of fruit in the form of salvation for many people coming from spiritual death to spiritual life.

And brothers, let us not miss that Jesus was staring his crucifixion in the face. He wasn't just staring death in the face.

See, in a sense, all of us are staring death in the face. All of us. We don't know what that death will look like.

[35:39] We don't know when that death will be. Jesus both knew when that death would come and he knew what that death would be. Notice what he says in verse 32. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

John tells us in verse 33, that Jesus said these words to show by what kind of death he was going to die. He didn't just know he was going to die, he knew how he was going to die, indeed, he knew who was going to kill him.

And it wasn't the jealous Jews, it wasn't the fearful Romans, Jesus knew, Jesus knew that it was his father.

He knew that it was his father in his great love for sinners like you and me, who was going to pierce him for our transgressions, and who was going to crush him for our iniquities, as the prophet Isaiah prophesied some 700 years earlier.

father, this is how the father would glorify his name, and this is why Jesus would say to the father, glorify your name, father. My soul is filled with agony, my soul is troubled, but shall I say, save me from this hour?

[37:04] No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name. this is how the father would glorify his name, in the cross of Christ, for undeserving sinners like you and me, who deserve judgment and wrath, but whom he loved, and determined to give grace and mercy.

So, rather than ask the father to save him from that hour, he says to the father, glorify your name. This was his mission. This is why he was born, this is why he lived, this is why he came to this hour. In the words of verse 32, we see Jesus showing us the only means by which we can be saved. This insisted salvation is obtained in no other way.

It is only through the cross of Jesus that he draws all people to himself. There's no other way. He says, if I be lifted up, I will draw all people to myself.

Now, it's clear that in referring to all people, Jesus is not referring to all people without exception. Because if he were, then all people without exception will be drawn to him and will be saved.

[38:54] That's universalism, which the Bible does not teach. The Bible does not teach that there will be no one in hell. Instead, by all people, what Jesus was clearly saying is that he will draw all people to himself without distinction.

Not without exception, but without distinction. Be they Jews, be they Gentiles, he will draw them from every nation, every tongue, every tribe, every people. And all people also means that it doesn't matter who you are, what your background is, or what sins you've committed, however many, however bad, he will draw all people to himself without distinction.

There's no one who is beyond the joy and grace of this merciful Savior who came for this purpose, that he would give his life, that he would hang on a cross, bearing the sin and the shame and the punishment that we sinners deserve, so that he may draw them by his grace to the Father.

On that first Palm Sunday, Jesus also announced something else that was wrapped up in his mission. He says in verse 31 that the hour had come for the judgment of this world and the ruler of this world.

Notice again how he says it, now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

[40:54] Now while scripture is very clear that there's coming a future judgment, a future final judgment, they're very clear on that, we must not miss this judgment that Jesus tells us was wrapped up in his mission in this hour that he had come to.

The death of Christ on the cross was a judgment of the whole world of mankind, judging us all that we were in the wrong, judging us all that we were in rebellion against God.

And Christ in his sacrificial death is the only way to be saved from that judgment. And so there are two options.

Eternal salvation through Christ or eternal damnation without Christ. Those are the two options.

Eternal salvation through Christ, eternal damnation away from Christ.

Jesus foreshadowed this on that first Palm Sunday. And verse 31, he tells us that the ruler of this world would be cast out.

[42:15] Now, there's a lot of debate about what this means. There's a lot of debate about exactly what does it mean that the ruler of this world is cast out. But here's what there's no debate about.

There's no debate about the identity of the ruler of this world. The ruler of this world at that time, the ruler of this world at this time was Satan himself.

And Jesus tells us that in that hour, in that mission that he had come to, that the world was judged and Satan, the ruler of this world, was cast out.

Now, time doesn't permit me to talk about in any detail what that casting out was from my understanding of scripture.

But I promise this, that as we're working our way through our Bible study, as we're talking about the last days of Jesus, this actually comes up as we work our way towards the end.

[43:18] And I promise that we'll study this and I'll take any questions and try to answer them to the best of my ability. But here's what I can tell you right now.

From the words of Jesus, Satan before the cross was not the same Satan after the cross. Satan does not occupy the position of power and authority that he had before the cross as he did after the cross.

or vice versa. He was different. He's not the same Satan. There are any number of scriptures in the New Testament that tell us that Christ in his cross defeated Satan and powers and principalities. Not the same. Does Satan still have power? Yes. But he's not the same Satan as powerful as he was before Christ cast him out and defeated him.

so I'll leave it there for the moment. The mission of Christ is to die on the cross.

[44:37] And in his dying and in his rising to defeat Satan and to save sinners. So we've covered his identity, we've covered his mission, and third and finally, want us to consider the message of Jesus.

Now clearly, when we think about Jesus, there are multiple messages that we can draw from the life of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount, for example.

You can go through Jesus taught a whole lot. And then we can come to this particular passage and consider any number of things that we can draw from what Jesus might be saying when he said on that first Palm Sunday.

But here's what I want us to hear this morning. When we encapsulate the ministry of Jesus and the message that came out of the ministry of Jesus, it comes down to one simple and single command. Putting aside the many words we can find that Jesus actually spoke. When we consider the message, the overarching message of Jesus, as he walked this earth, the overarching message of Jesus is this, come and follow me.

[46:10] That is the message of Jesus, overarchingly. Christianity. And when you think about it, everything else that Jesus said that we may point to can find its way under that command, come and follow me.

This is the message that endures over all generations, this is the message that would endure until the day that Jesus returns, this is the message of biblical Christianity.

Christianity. Come and follow me. And brothers and sisters, this is a call to discipleship. This is not a call to living a better life and turning over another leaf.

This is not a call to joining a church and going through religious activities. No, this is a call to follow Jesus in discipleship. It says, come and follow me.

This message of Jesus, we find it in this first account of Palm Sunday from the eyes of John in verses 25 and 26. Look again at what Jesus said on that first Palm Sunday to the large crowd was following him with their own agenda that were contrary to his.

[47:41] And I would dare say before I read it, Jesus would have no need to say this to them if they were indeed doing this. But they were flocking to him and not following him. He says in verse 25, whoever loves his life loses it.

And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. if anyone serves me he must follow me.

Not watch me. Not learn a bunch of things about me in a vacuum. No, he must follow me. He must come after me as a disciple.

And he says this, and where I am there will my servant be also. if anyone serves me the father will honor him.

Brothers and sisters, these are non-negotiable terms of what it means to follow Jesus. And here's what I would say to us this morning.

[48:55] If you truly know Jesus, you are a disciple of Jesus. And the only question after that is are you a good one or a bad one.

If we belong to Jesus, this is what we have signed up for. This is what he enlists us to be and to do. To be disciples, to follow him, to stay close to him.

We don't know the way away from Jesus showing us the way. He calls us to follow him. The first issue that Jesus gets to, that gets in our way of following him, is this issue of loving our lives.

And what loving our lives simply means is that we naturally want to live our lives for ourselves in whatever manner we want to live it in however we think is best for us.

[50:04] We naturally want to live like that. Without exception. All of us, that's our default position. We love our lives. This is why Paul could say to husbands, love your wives the way you love yourselves.

Because it's a given that we love ourselves. We naturally want to pursue whatever we believe will make us happy.

And we naturally oppose anything in any way that goes against what we want. And what is clear is that what Jesus has in view is this world and its allurements and its attractions.

Notice how he says it again, verse 25. He says, whoever loves his life loses it. He doesn't pull the world in on this part of it.

He does on the other side of the sentence where he says, whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

[51:15] And so what Jesus is addressing in the first part of verse 25 is whoever loves his life in this world, whoever loves his life for the allurements of this world, the attractions of this world, the appeasements of this world, you lose it.

And Jesus here is using hate figuratively when he talks about if you hate your life in this world world, that you will keep it for eternal life.

What he's just saying to us, he's calling us to not follow our instincts, not follow our natural desires. Indeed, he's calling us to be willing to do what we see him doing here, when he says, my soul is troubled, but Father, glorify your name.

Father, have your will be done in my life. And brothers and sisters, I will tell you this morning, if you have been serving Jesus, if you've been following Jesus, and you don't know what it is to lay your will on the altar, if you don't know what it is to die to yourself, you need to question if you're following Jesus.

Question if you're coming after him the way he has called you to follow him. He calls us not to love our lives so much in this world, that we would hold on to it at the expense of doing the Father's will, and doing what the Father would have us to do, and call us to do.

[52:59] This is what it means to follow Jesus. Not loving our lives in this world. Not loving anything in this world. Laying our lives down, hating it as it were, so that we might follow him.

And that's what Jesus did. That's what we see him doing on that first Palm Sunday. He cried out to the Father in the trouble of soul that was in front of him as he saw his certain death five days away, asking the Father to be glorified in his life.

Brothers and sisters, that needs to be our prayer each day. God, glorify yourself in me. When it comes to laying our rights down, when it comes to doing that which is difficult on our flesh to do, that we would cry, Father, would you glorify yourself in me?

I don't want to gratify myself. I don't want to do what I feel like doing. God, I want to do what will bring you glory. Notice what Jesus says in verse 26.

He says, if anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

[54:23] He will honor us. As we lay our lives down. One of the things that we have to say about Jesus, is Jesus never falsely advertised.

Jesus never falsely told us that following him would be any different from what it truly is. Because this invitation that Jesus gives us is an invitation to die.

It's an invitation to come and die so that we may truly live. He's saying to us, if you in your own wisdom hold on to your life, believing that by so doing you will live, you're going to lose it.

And the very goals you have for your life, the very things you are hoping to accomplish, you're going to find it's a dead end street. He says, but if you will die to them, if you will lay them down, and you

will come and follow me, you will find your life, you will find it abundantly.

as you pursue God's purposes, we find our lives, brothers and sisters, in the purposes of God, not in our limited human wisdom, where we can only see right in front of our noses.

[55:40] Any other way of living life, life becomes a lost cause. I think from a distance, if we were to be observers, if we were observers of that first Palm Sunday, we would swear there were a lot of people following Jesus.

There appeared to be a lot following Jesus, but they only appeared to be following Jesus. What about us, brothers and sisters? Are we following Jesus?

Are we just walking around him, hoping he'd do this for us, he'd do that for us? I get a better this, a better that, more of this, more of that. No, what Jesus calls us to will cost us.

He calls us to discipleship. He calls us to follow God's purposes and not our own. He calls us to pursue God's agenda and not our own.

He calls us to be conformed to the image of Jesus rather than relating to Jesus as if he were play-doh and we make him into our own image.

[57:06] Brothers and sisters, in this Easter season, as we reflect on the amazing love of God, God, in sending his son to die a death that wasn't what it was for theatrics or dramatic effect.

The death that Jesus died is the death we deserve to die. That's what our sins deserve. The grotesqueness of that, the hideousness of that, that is the site of our sin and that is what our sins deserve.

Jesus just didn't deserve to be euthanized as our substitute. No, the death that he died, that is what our sins deserve.

deserve. I pray that as we reflect on that, I pray that we would freshly embrace the identity of Jesus, we would freshly embrace the mission of Jesus, and we would freshly embrace the message of Jesus, that he invites us to follow him, and he calls us to knowingly follow him, understanding that we are signing up to die to ourselves.

But it's the most joyful life that we could ever live. May the Lord cause our meditations upon the Savior during these days to deepen may he cause us to see him as he truly is, may we better understand his mission, and may we embrace and live his message to the glory of his great name.

[59:16] Amen. Amen.