

OASIS: PALM SUNDAY & EASTER MESSAGES DONE IN SYNC WITH THE “LIVING GOD’S STORY” JOURNEY



Note to LC Leaders - In order to keep the rhythm of our LC calendar, this study is combining elements of Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. As usual, this study has been prepared prior to the giving of the sermons. However their goal is to encourage our LC’s to converse and go deeper in the messages’ texts and big ideas.

Preface: *Welcome to our LC Bible study in our sermon series “Living God’s Story.” As you know, this year we are working our way through the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. So fasten your seat belt—it is quite a ride! These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading.*

Palm Sunday BIG Idea: Though Israel was expecting a particular type of King to triumphantly march into Jerusalem to defeat a particular enemy, Jesus humbly entered Jerusalem to defeat humanity’s enemy and became the King we needed.

Possible starter question (3 min.): How do “important people” enter a city, a building or an event?

Matthew 21:1-11

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, **2** saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. **3** If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

5 “Say to Daughter Zion,

‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. **7** They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. **8** A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. **9** The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

11 The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

O – What do you notice about Jesus’ entry?

I – Why do you think Jesus chose to enter this way? Why did Jesus supernaturally arrange for a donkey to bring Him in? Could He not have supernaturally arranged for a white stallion instead? What are we to understand here?

A – If Jesus were to come today, what would be the modern-day equivalent of entering the public sector humbly? Remember, He already had a massive following.

O – Of all of Israel’s kings, why do the people shout, “Son of David!”?

(David was regarded as Israel’s greatest king and it was during his reign that Israel enjoyed its best years. Interesting side note: Verse 14 reports that “the blind and the lame came to him at the temple and he healed them.” During David’s reign, the king did not allow the blind and the lame to enter his palace (2 Samuel 5:8). However, Jesus, the greater King, gathers the blind and lame back into the temple. Jesus fulfills even King David’s story.)

I – Throughout His ministry, Jesus appears to be decisive and act with absolute authority. Then in other moments, He demonstrates great compassion, humility and ordinariness. Naturally, some are confused. Why do you think Jesus allows for these paradoxes?

I – Matthew quotes Zechariah 9:9: “Say to Daughter Zion, See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of donkey.” But he leaves out “triumphant and victorious is he.” Why do you think he does this?

(Matthew, in effect, is saying, “Watch carefully, because Jesus is about to take our ideas of triumph, power and authority and flip them on their heads.”)

A – Describe a time when you have seen Jesus treated with great popularity in the culture but later saw Him betrayed? What is the public fascination with Jesus?

A – Describe a time when you have seen Jesus treated with great popularity by the Church but later saw Him betrayed in the sense of not trusting Him enough? Why do you think there is always a hesitation in following Jesus to the cross?

Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single night.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.

b. Complement OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).

c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!

d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.

e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.

f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.

OASIS: PALM SUNDAY & EASTER MESSAGES DONE IN SYNC WITH THE “LIVING GOD’S STORY” JOURNEY



Note to LC Leaders - In order to keep the rhythm of our LC calendar, this study is combining elements of Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. As usual, this study has been prepared prior to the giving of the sermons. However their goal is to encourage our LC’s to converse and go deeper in the messages’ texts and big ideas.

Preface: *Welcome to our LC Bible study in our sermon series “Living God’s Story.” As you know, this year we are working our way through the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. So fasten your seat belt—it is quite a ride! These LC studies will complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading.*

Easter Sunday BIG Idea - Jesus is greater than...

Possible starter question (3 min.):

What is your favorite part of the Resurrection Story?

I Corinthians 15:20-28, 55-58

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. **22** For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. **23** But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. **24** Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. **25** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death. **27** For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. **28** When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. **54** When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

55 “Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

O – What are your initial observations of the passage?

O – I Corinthians 15 is steeped in Christ-centered theology. How would you describe Paul's central point in these verses?

I – Many of us learned in our Philosophy classes that the greatest evil is death and the greatest good is life. In verse 55, Paul is quoting Hosea 13:14, and rhetorically asks where its power has gone. How do you reconcile Paul's words with the grief that accompanies the loss of a loved one?

I – Paul tell us in verse 56 that the sting of death is sin and the power of sin is in the law. But we learn in Romans 7:7-12 that the law and sin are not the same.

(We need to be very careful that we do not confuse sin as the law. Paul is explaining that sin delights in the law and sin's "power" is supported by the law that humanity is under. In order for us to be freed from it, Paul joyfully explains that Christ triumphs over the law, sin, and death and invites humanity into His Kingdom, a new way of life. Jesus is greater than the law, sin and death.)

I – The Protestant reformer Martin Luther said, "We need a 'cross-shaped' theology." How would you explain to someone unfamiliar with the Christian message of what the cross is about? *(Jesus' work on the cross is multi-faceted: Jesus' resurrection proclaims His victory over death, offers forgiveness for sins, and invites everyone to live the new Kingdom now and forever.)*

A - The Easter message at Grace Chapel this year asked us a few questions:
What did you used to think before you embraced Jesus' resurrection story?
How has that changed since choosing to live in God's story?
Finish this sentence ... "Jesus is greater than ..."

(Conclude and close in prayer in thankfulness for the Resurrection story of Jesus.)

Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

g. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single night.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.

h. Complement OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?).

i. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!

j. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.

k. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.

l. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching," rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.