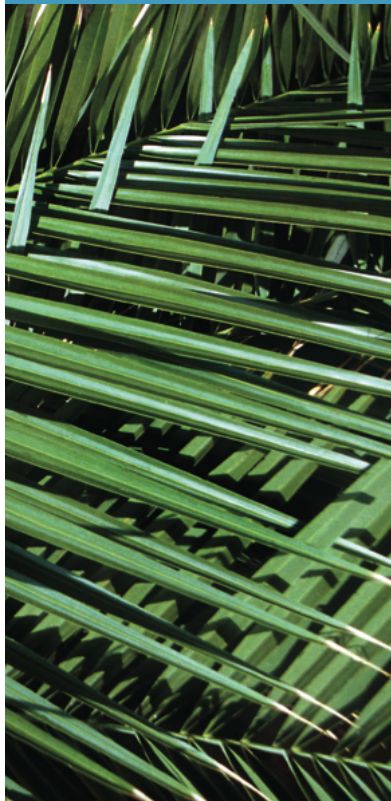


## Bible Passage

Luke 19:29–44 (Palm Sunday)



# Praise on Palm Sunday

## Desired Outcomes

1. To read about Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem, riding on a colt.
2. To consider Jesus' sorrow over Jerusalem because the people did not respond to his message.
3. To understand the importance of Palm Sunday as we prepare for Jesus' work in our own lives.

## Session Key Verses

"I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out." As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it. —Luke 19:40–41

## Optional Materials

- Ability to show an Internet video
- Pieces of palm fronds
- *For free digital resources to enhance this lesson, go to [www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources](http://www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources).*

## Sneak Peek

Jesus entered Jerusalem to the exultation of the crowd, but he wept over the destruction that would come to the city.

# 1 *Get Acquainted*



Create a welcoming atmosphere and greet people as they enter the room. If anyone is new to your group, take a few moments to introduce yourselves. Open with prayer.

As a group, talk about past experiences with or memories of Palm Sunday. Many churches incorporate children carrying palm branches into the worship service on this day. Another visual element from Palm Sunday is that of Jesus riding on a colt.

**What is the typical role of Palm Sunday in the life of the church?** Discuss this with the group. Palm Sunday is often treated as a “warm-up” to Easter. It is certainly an important part of the Easter story, but it also demonstrates Jesus’ sorrow and helps us to prepare for God’s work in our own lives.

If possible, watch together the Palm Sunday YouTube video at [www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources](http://www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources). You might also distribute pieces of palm fronds among the group as a reminder of today’s study. (These may be available from a florist if you do not have ready access to a palm tree.)

# 2 *Discover*



Read and discuss [Luke 19:29–44](#). The commentary sections can be used to generate dialogue, or for study prior to your meeting.

## Luke 19:29–40

### **Commentary**

Luke’s account of Jesus’ triumphal entry emphasizes Jesus’ refusal to avoid the public eye. The previous narrative in this Gospel points ahead to this moment. We have been told to anticipate Jesus’ “departure...at Jerusalem” (9:31). We also recall that Jesus had “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (9:51). Since that point, the entire middle section of Luke has led us toward Jerusalem.



Now when Jesus arrived, “the whole multitude of disciples” praised God—and the order-keepers implored Jesus to shut the thing down (37–39). The whole story has anticipated this moment, and we find ourselves in the midst of conflict.

Why did the Pharisees want Jesus’ disciples to hush? We should avoid the temptation to invent some certain motive for the Pharisees based on our assumptions about them. We don’t know if the Pharisees disliked the messianic implications of the crowd’s praise for Jesus, if they were simply trying to keep the peace, or if they were resistant to Jesus and his popularity. From Luke’s perspective, the Pharisees come across as flawed but mostly benign characters. One might say Luke’s Pharisees sought to keep Jesus in

check rather than oppose him outright. They wanted Jesus to keep his teaching and activities “safe.”

The Pharisees had already warned Jesus, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you” (13:31). It may be that the Pharisees were genuinely concerned for Jesus and wanted to keep him from harm. It’s also possible that Jesus’ presence posed a threat to order, and they wanted him to leave. It’s even possible the Pharisees invented the threat altogether in an effort to distract Jesus. Jesus refused their request to rebuke his disciples: “If these were silent, the stones would shout out” (19:40).<sup>1</sup>

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1. Adapted from “Commentary on Luke 19:29–44,” accessed August 11, 2016, [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1656](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1656).

## Questions

Many elements of the Palm Sunday story draw on Old Testament references. Those who were there that day may have picked up on some of the connections we miss. Look up each of these verses and discuss its significance with respect to today's text. You may wish to look at the surrounding verses in order to discover the original context. **How does reading these Old Testament verses influence your understanding of the story described in Luke?**

- Zechariah 9:9
- Psalm 118:26
- Habakkuk 2:11

## Luke 19:41–44

### Commentary

Jesus recognized the source of the danger he faced; where he offered “the things that make for peace” (19:42), the holy city could not perceive this truth. Jesus would pay with his life, and so would any who happened to be present when Jerusalem was eventually crushed.

What price do disciples today pay when speaking “the things that make for peace” with respect to issues such as gun control, political unrest, terrorist attacks, and discrimination? We find ourselves in the dilemma of speaking up or hushing up as we face conflicts between the flow of culture and the path of Christ. The temptation is always present to ignore justice for the sake of order, seeking peace that comes from the absence of tension rather than the peace that results when justice prevails.<sup>2</sup>

Christians are sometimes encouraged to pray that God would break their hearts for the things that break God's heart. Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem—not the buildings and the streets but the people who missed the opportunity to know the peace of God. In AD 70, the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem and destroyed it, just as Jesus prophesied. The temple was demolished, the city was burned, and as many as 1.1 million people were killed.

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2. Ibid.



## Questions

- Jesus wept not over his impending death, but over the people who rejected the opportunity to obtain life and peace as a result of his death. **When have you offered the best for someone you loved, only to have that person reject your offer?** It has been said that you can't want more for others than they want for themselves. **What does this mean to you?**
- **Would you say Jesus was making some type of statement? If so, what might he have been trying to communicate through his words and actions? To whom was he directing his comments? What does this mean for believers today? What does it mean for non-believers today?**

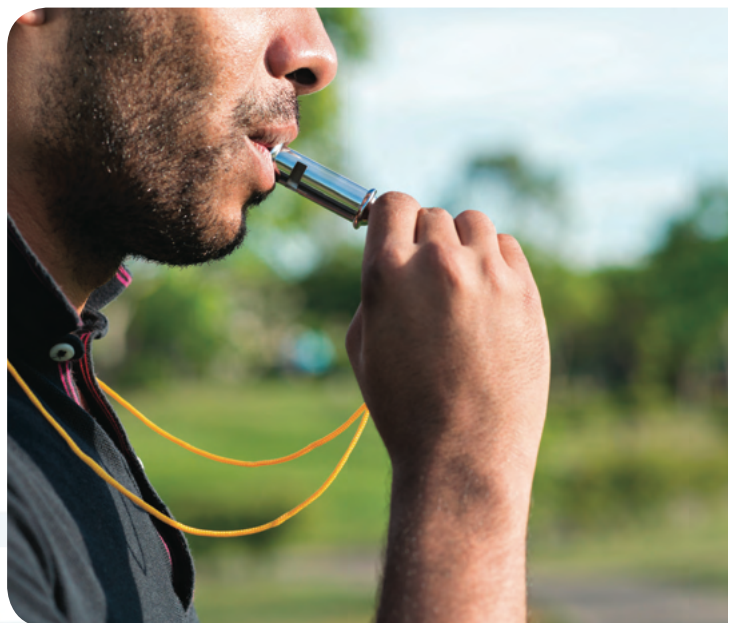
## 3 Experience



### Option 1

**What is a snitch or a whistleblower?** Discuss responses to this question. A snitch might be defined as a person who tells someone in authority about something wrong that someone else has done. A *whistleblower* is someone who reports wrongdoing within a company or organization.

**Are there particular moments when one is compelled to speak up? What are some examples? How was Jesus' entry into Jerusalem a time when his disciples were compelled to shout his praise?** Compare and contrast situations where we are compelled to speak out, and also situations where we are compelled to remain silent.



## Option 2

Jesus wept over Jerusalem because of his love and compassion for the people of that city. Work in pairs or small groups to recommend compassionate responses to the following persons:

- A convicted drug dealer
- A convicted murderer facing the death penalty
- A child caught lying to his or her parents
- A woman convicted of prostitution
- A man convicted of hiring a prostitute
- A person convicted of the sexual abuse of a minor



**What impact (if any) should our compassion for someone have on seeking to mitigate or eliminate the consequences of that person's actions?** Discuss this with the group.

## Apply



Respond to the following questions, then share your thoughts with a partner as you are willing:

Jesus' disciples praised Jesus with words reserved for a king. Their exuberance did not go unnoticed by the Pharisees, who called for the disciples to stop.

**What people and things in your life tend to dampen your enthusiasm for the things of God?**

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A modern-day metaphor for “stones crying out” might be, “If these walls could talk....” The stones in Jerusalem had witnessed the shedding of innocent people’s blood by the hands of selfish and power-hungry people in positions of religious and government authority. Maybe today, those stones would mourn and wail instead of shouting praises. **If the stones in your childhood home could cry out, what would they say? What have they seen? How about the stones in your current home? How about those where you work?**

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**What people in your life do you care about enough to weep over? What circumstances would cause you to weep over them? How does it make you feel to consider that Jesus might weep over you? If he did, what would he be weeping about?**

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**The Pharisees, though not all of them, represented a hypocritical group of men who used their influence and power to control and oppress the lives of others in the name of God. The lavish walls of their homes were silent. The stones of the temple-based religious empire they had built did not cry out—except for one. The stone that the builders rejected cried out in agonizing pain for the oppressed, the abused, and the innocent—and wept for the guilty.**

In contemplative silence, think about the oppressed and abused in your community. Consider whether anyone speaks up for these groups, and what the people of God might do for these people. Also, think about the oppressors and abusers in your community, and how you might demonstrate the compassion of Christ for them.

Palm Sunday is a time of preparation for the death and eventual resurrection of Jesus—a mixture of joy and sadness for believers, as it was for him. As you close in prayer, ask God to open your mouths and your lives in praise to him, and to break your hearts for lives that are lost.

## Daily Bible Readings

Week 4

### *Sunday*

Luke 19:29–44  
*Praise on Palm Sunday*

### *Monday*

Luke 22:28–46  
*A Prediction and a Prayer*

### *Tuesday*

Luke 22:47–71  
*Jesus Arrested and Tried*

### *Wednesday*

Luke 23:3–25  
*Before Pilate and Herod*

### *Thursday*

Luke 23:26–31  
*The Crucifixion*

### *Friday*

Luke 23:48–49  
*Responses to Jesus' Death*

### *Saturday*

Luke 23:50–56  
*The Burial of Jesus*