

Remnant Life Church

March 29, 2026

Palm Sunday

The Final Week of Jesus' Life

Matthew 21-28; Mark 11-16; Luke 19-24; John 12-20

For many Christians who have gone to church their entire lives, the events and stories, even certain words and phrases, can become so familiar that their true meaning can become lost, assumed, or even completely misunderstood.

The last week of Jesus' life is filled with incredible significance regarding the culmination and fulfillment of Jesus' very purpose here on Earth.

But might there be some things we are missing through the familiarity of these accounts?

- The events of Holy Week are recorded in all 4 gospels
 - That in and of itself causes it to stand out and underscores its uniqueness and the importance of our understanding
 - The NT gospels are divided into 2 sections
 - Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the Synoptic gospels meaning “side by side”
 - We can take these 3 books and read them comparatively since Mark, the first book written sometime in the 50's, was used by the other two (both written within 20 years of each other) as a reference
 - This explains why there are similarities
 - As well as why there are differences
 - Matthew and Luke did not copy Mark's account
 - But they utilized it, as the one closest to the time of the actual events, in their own writings
 - John's gospel, however, is written in a different manner
 - He focuses on the activities of Jesus' ministry and reveals more of the mystery of Jesus' personhood
 - Primarily because, like Matthew, he was an eye-witness to what took place
 - He intentionally bypasses the birth and early years narratives as well as the lineages of Jesus since they are already provided in Matthew and Luke
 - John was writing to a largely believing audience of readers who were in need of theological reassurances to stand against and refute heretical or false teaching about the nature and deity of Jesus
 - He also wrote it with an eye toward evangelism
 - Intending for the believer to be assured by his accounts of Jesus, and then share that same message with others
 - And so the reason for the many differences in these four accounts are given to individual observations, the date and purpose of the writings as well as the divine inspiration.

- Similar to two people going to the same event
- Then recounting it several years later
- They were both in the same place at the same time but their memories will be different
- And because of that, there are very few accounts that are recorded by each of the authors
 - For instance, of all the miracles recorded in the Gospels, only the feeding of the 5000 is found in all four
 - Likewise, these days leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection, while not identical in detail, do speak to a very similar timeline and events
- Holy Week begins with Jesus' arrival outside of Jerusalem 6 days before the start of Passover (**John 12:1**)
- What I would like to do this Palm Sunday is identify the important activities of Jesus each day leading up to Good Friday

The Reason – so that you can grasp the detailed precision with which God's plan is being completed in this final week of Jesus' life and ministry

- God's hand was in every step, every action that Jesus took
- It is that same hand that cares for and provides for you
- My goal is that we each leave here this morning bolstered and encouraged by the love our Creator God has for each of us

And so, it begins on the Friday before Palm Sunday

1. **Friday** – Jesus arrives in Bethany, a town less than 2 miles from Jerusalem, and stays with Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus.
 - i. They are invited for dinner to the home of Simon the Leper (**Matt. 26:6**)
 - ii. Some scholars believe, although there is no biblical confirmation, that Simon may have been the father of Jesus' 3 friends
 - iii. And it is here that Mary anoints Jesus with oil
 1. Two of the Gospels present this as a sign of Jesus' authority as she anoints His head (**Matt and Luke**)
 2. **John** presents it as the anointing of His feet to illustrate Mary's humility as well as her devotion to Jesus as demonstrated by the sacrifice of this very expensive oil
 3. It is certainly very possible that she did both, and the authors chose to focus on the one over the other
 - iv. The value of the oil and spices was approximately 300 denarii or about a year's wages
 1. The disciples, led by Judas, spoke against the act (**Matt 26:8-9**)
 2. But we are also told that Judas, the treasurer and a thief, was hiding his greed (**John 12:4-6**)
 - v. In spite of His many warnings to the disciples of His impending death, only Mary seemed to grasp the true meaning of His words.
 1. Because there were 2 other uses of the perfumed oil

- a. One was to prepare a body for burial
- b. In fact, Jesus spoke those very words when He defended Mary's actions
- c. **Matt 26:12** - *When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.*
- d. But the other was as an act of worship
 - i. Perfumes were used in the sacrifice rituals
 - ii. In **Exodus 30:22-29**, God instructed Moses to create a sacred anointing oil to be used to consecrate the priests
 - iii. In the same way, Mary was performing an act of worship

2. **Saturday**

- i. The Jewish Sabbath
- ii. Jesus would have spent that time observing the traditional elements of the day as well as spending time with His friends, including the 12

3. **Sunday – Palm Sunday**

- i. Jesus sends two of His disciples on ahead to get a colt that is tied up so He can ride into the city (**Mark 11:1-6**)
- ii. This fulfills the prophesy written nearly 500 years earlier by the prophet Zechariah
 - 1. *See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zec 9:9)*
- iii. Jesus then entered the city through the Golden or Eastern gate
 - 1. Because of this gate's proximity to the temple this is also where, each year, the lambs to be sacrificed for the atonement of the people's sins would enter the city to be inspected for flaws and blemishes in accordance with the Mosaic law
 - 2. Jesus, however, entered the city as the final blood sacrifice, and as the Spotless Lamb of God
 - 3. That date would have been Nisan 10 – which was the same day every year that the pilgrims presented their lambs to the priests for Passover
- iv. And it is through this same gate that the cries of Hosanna meaning “save us” are now being heard
 - 1. Because like the disciples, the people also believed that Jesus was coming to set them free
 - 2. But they were convinced their freedom would be from the oppression of the Romans
 - a. In reality, Jesus had come to set them free from the shackles of sin
 - 3. Even His appearance on a colt, rather than on a magnificent steed, further demonstrated His nature of peace and humility
 - a. A steed was ridden by a conquering hero of war
 - b. A donkey, or in this case a colt, was ridden by a man of peace and a prophet of God

4. Monday

- i. He reentered the temple and confronted the money changers ([Matt 21:12-13](#); [Mark 11:15-17](#))
- ii. He healed the blind and lame who came to Him ([Matt 21:14](#))
- iii. He cursed the fig tree that withered ([Matt 21:19](#); [Mark 11:14](#))
 1. Jesus did this as a symbolic act of judgment against Israel because, like the fig tree, their lives were also fruitless ([Matt 21:42-45](#))
 2. And it was the sin of Israel that caused Jesus to weep as He returned to the temple ([Luke 19:41-44](#))
 3. The nation did not understand who Jesus was or what their actions would bring but Jesus knew
 - a. Because in less than 40 years the temple would be leveled and burned by the Romans led by General Titus
 4. We read in [Matt 24:2](#) that not one stone would remain atop of another
 - a. There was a reason the Romans were so thorough in their destruction
 - b. Because of the amount of gold used to fashion the instruments of sacrifice, there was a rumor of gold used instead of mortar to hold the stones of the building together and so the soldiers separated every single stone one from the other

5. Tuesday

1. Jesus spends this day teaching utilizing parables regarding love, the greatest commandment and the sinfulness of spiritual pride ([Matt 23:1-36](#); [Mark 12:38-40](#))
2. He deals, once again, face-to-face with the Pharisees and other spiritual leaders who continue to try and trap Him with His own words – something they are unable to do ([Matt 22:15-20](#); [Mark 12:18-27](#); [Luke 20:41-44](#))
3. And it is on this day that some of Jesus most stern and forceful teaching takes place, addressed to those same leaders as He cries out for Jerusalem ([Matt 23](#))
4. Jesus then presents one of His most profound teachings regarding the end times which we know as the Olivet Discourse ([Matt 24:4-25:46](#))
 - a. Jesus is responding here to the disciple's question of, *What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?* ([Matt 24:3](#))
 - b. And so even in His final hours, Jesus is speaking words of assurance and comfort that He will return!

6. Wednesday

- i. A day of rest
- ii. No activities are recorded in any of the accounts

- iii. It is likely that Jesus simply took one final measure of time to be with those He loved

7. Thursday

- i. This day will begin to directly lead Jesus to the cross
- ii. We read in Luke's account that He sends Peter and John to prepare the room for the Passover meal (**Luke 22:8**)
- iii. There are three primary events that will take place this final full day
 - 1. Jesus washes the disciple's feet (**John 13:1-17**)
 - a. Peter's refusal and then, once Jesus explained it to him, his request to be washed all over
 - b. This act of humility was not just a demonstration of how we as Christians are to love one another
 - c. Jesus uses two different, two very important words for wash found in **John 13:10**
 - i. The first is the word *lou-oh* means to totally clean a dead body or the blood from a wound
 - ii. The second is the word *nip-toe* meaning to clean one's hands or feet
 - d. These two words tell us that through repentance and our salvation we have been cleansed (Lou-oh) of the penalty of sin and death (**Rom 6:23**)
 - e. But we will also need to clean (Nip-toe) ourselves constantly of sin throughout the entirety of our lives
 - 2. Jesus then eats the Passover meal with His disciples (**Matt 26; Mark 14; Luke 22**)
 - a. This is our communion service - which we will take together at our Good Friday service
 - b. In this one action, Jesus changed the meaning and significance of the Passover meal
 - i. The Passover meal had always been to commemorate the Israelites freedom from the bondage of Egypt
 - ii. Jesus now made it about our freedom from the bondage of sin
 - c. But before they enter into the meal, Judas is identified by name and flees the room – why did he leave?
 - i. Because a heart given over to sin cannot participate in this intimate time with the Savior
 - ii. But why then did Jesus “honor” him with the dipping of the bread into the wine?
 - 1. Yes, it was to identify him as the traitor
 - 2. But I also believe it was because He was giving Judas one last opportunity to examine himself... (**I Cor 11:28-29**)
 - 3. Just as we are called to examine ourselves each time we partake of the elements

- d. They then sang a hymn - the Hallel
(Psalms 113-118)
- 3. Finally, Jesus leads them to the Garden of Gethsemane
(Matt 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 18)
 - a. He prays while the disciples sleep (3 times)
 - b. Judas leads a band of men to arrest Jesus (John 18:3)
 - i. The KJV says a band of soldiers accompanied Judas
 - 1. ITOL – *SPY-rah*
 - ii. One-tenth of a legion – also called a cohort
 - iii. A legion was 6000 men; as many as 600 soldiers came to arrest Jesus
 - 1. They likely surrounded the entire area where Jesus and the disciples were praying
 - 2. When you realize that number the next account found in John is all the more powerful
 - iv. John 18:6 – Jesus answers “I am” and they all fall over backward
 - 1. Again ITOL – *PIP-two*
 - 2. Not fall down but to be thrown down
 - 3. Jesus was not a victim about to be overwhelmed
 - 4. He was, at His own will, giving His life over
 - c. Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus he high priest’s servant
 - i. Peter still had belief that it was to be a physical revolution
 - ii. Jesus continued, in love, to teach them His way was not the way of men
 - iii. He had all power
 - iv. He says to Peter in Matt 26:53 that He call on His heavenly Father and He would send more than 12 legions of angels
 - 1. A legion is 6000
 - 2. 12 legions is 72,000 angels
 - v. One angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers – (2 Kings 19:35)
 - vi. IOW – He could have destroyed the world many times over if He wanted to
 - d. Then, one of the saddest verses in all the Bible
 - i. Matt 26:56 - ...*Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled*

Jesus entered the city that day to a crowd of enthusiastic supporters

He also entered into a city of hostile opponents intent on killing Him

And so, to bring this Palm Sunday service to a close, I simply ask, which side are you on?

- That might seem like a foolish question to some
 - But that is a question that is important for us to address every day
 - It is an on-going assessment of who or what reigns in your heart

- The Pharisees and religious leaders had all the head-knowledge and experience of the law
 - But they did not apply it in their lives
 - Their intelligence meant nothing with their hearts hardened to the love of God for all people

- The people were filled with expectation
 - Anticipating a military-type revolt to set them free from the rule of the Romans
 - But their focus was on the wrong thing
 - They had, like the church in Ephesus, lost their first love and their lack of spiritual fruit
 - Because of that, Jesus was brought to tears

- The disciples lived with Jesus every day for 3 years
 - Yet their pride often blinded them
 - Their old way of doing things and traditions caused them to resist the new way of life that Jesus brought
 - Their lack of total belief in who Jesus was made them flee the garden consumed more with their own safety

Each of us, at any given time, shares those same frailties and shortcomings.

- And so, I encourage you on this Palm Sunday 2026, to examine your life, your heart, your commitments this morning
- And like Mary demonstrated, live every day in devotion and worship of the One who freely laid down His life for you.