

## Grow Group Resources

### - Sermon Summary: Hosanna! Or Hosanna! - John 12:12-19

- This Palm Sunday message explores the meaning of the word “Hosanna” and how its significance shifts depending on the heart and understanding behind it. Just like certain words or phrases can carry very different meanings based on tone or context, “Hosanna” can express either a desperate plea or a confident praise. The sermon centers on this tension and transformation.
- The word “Hosanna” originates from Psalm 118, where it means “save us, we pray.” In its original context, it is a cry of desperation—God’s people calling out for deliverance, likely in the midst of danger or oppression. It is a humble, urgent plea for rescue. However, by the time we reach John 12 and the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the tone of “Hosanna” has shifted. The crowds are no longer crying out in desperation but shouting with excitement and hope, celebrating the arrival of what they believe to be their Saviour and King.
- As Jesus enters Jerusalem, the crowds wave palm branches—symbols of national identity and hope for liberation—and declare, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” Their cry now carries a sense of expectation and celebration. Instead of “save us,” it leans toward “the Saviour is here.” This shift raises an important question: what caused this change from a plea for help to a proclamation of hope?
- The answer lies in the presence and power of Jesus, particularly demonstrated through the raising of Lazarus. Lazarus is at the center of the scene, and his resurrection has dramatically influenced the crowd’s expectations. Jesus has done what no other leader or supposed Messiah had done—He raised someone from the dead. This miracle fuels the crowd’s belief that Jesus truly is the long-awaited deliverer. As a result, their “Hosanna” becomes filled with hope rather than desperation.
- However, while the crowd is full of excitement, their understanding is incomplete. Many expect a political or military Messiah who will overthrow Roman rule and restore national independence. Yet Jesus intentionally challenges these expectations by entering Jerusalem on a donkey, symbolizing humility and peace rather than conquest. He is indeed a king, but not the kind they anticipated. His mission is not to defeat Rome but to conquer sin, death, and shame.
- The presence of Lazarus also creates tension, especially among the religious leaders. The chief priests, many of whom are Sadducees who deny the resurrection, are threatened by Lazarus’ very existence. His life stands as undeniable evidence against their beliefs and

undermines their authority. Rather than respond in faith, they plot to kill both Jesus and Lazarus, demonstrating resistance to the truth even in the face of overwhelming evidence.

- The sermon then connects this moment to our present reality. Like the people in John 12, we live in a time of waiting—anticipating the return of Jesus. Just as the crowd’s hope was shaped by the resurrection power they witnessed in Lazarus, our hope is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus Himself. His victory over death gives us a “living hope,” as described in 1 Peter 1:3. This is not a distant or theoretical hope but an active, present reality that shapes how we live.
- Because Jesus is alive, we can face the uncertainties, fears, and trials of life with confidence. The resurrection assures us that death is not the end, suffering is not final, and restoration is coming. It reframes our present struggles in light of a future promise. Even when life is difficult, we hold onto the certainty that Jesus will return and make all things new.
- The sermon concludes with a key takeaway: the resurrection transforms our “Hosanna.” What begins as a desperate cry for help becomes a declaration of confident praise. When we understand who Jesus is and what He has done, our perspective shifts. We move from pleading for rescue to celebrating the reality that salvation has already begun and will be fully realized when He returns.
- Ultimately, Palm Sunday invites us to examine our own response. Are we crying out in desperation without hope, or are we living in the confident joy of a risen Saviour? The call is to embrace the living hope found in Jesus and to respond with a genuine, hope-filled “Hosanna.”

## **- Grow Group Questions**

1. Start your time with a word of prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to reveal the Son and bring glory to the Father through the word and conversations.
2. Have someone read John 12:12-19 and Psalm 118:19-26 out loud.
  - A. What stands out to you as you hear these passages? What questions arise?
3. Considering all four of the Gospel accounts, take a moment to describe the Triumphal Entry (See Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, and Luke 19:28-40).
  - A. What is unique to John’s telling of the story?
  - B. What things do you think he is trying to emphasize?

4. The crowd in the story has mixed perspectives, expectations, and backgrounds.
  - A. What hopes do you think some people are placing in Jesus?
  - B. What kind of king do they want Him to be, and how might the palm branches and other elements reveal their intentions?
  - C. How does Jesus choose to reveal Himself? (Think about the imagery of the donkey)
5. How do you understand the phrase “Hosanna!” found in John 12 and Psalm 118?
  - A. How can a cry for salvation also be a hope-filled praise?
6. Lazarus being present on the scene and alive produced hope in many of the crowd.
  - A. Why would Jesus’ raising of Lazarus produce hope in those who have seen or heard the miracle?
  - B. Lazarus’ resurrection foreshadows Christ’s own resurrection. How can Christ’s resurrection from death produce hope in the world today?
  - C. What would it take to move the resurrection from a fact that we know, to a reality that can transform our daily lives?
  - D. The crowd had been waiting for the Messiah to come for generations. In what ways are we waiting for Jesus now?
7. Read 1 Peter 3-9 out loud.
  - A. How do you understand the resurrection as a ‘living hope’?
  - B. What are the results of God’s great mercy to the believer in this text?
8. Close this time in prayer. Pray for those who are lacking hope to find a fresh portion of it in the reality of the resurrection.