

Not My Will: Sanctification - Lamb

Exodus 12:3, 5-8; Isaiah 53:6-7; Ezekiel 43:1-5; Matthew 26:26; John 12:12-19, 23-27

This is the fifth week of the series “Not My Will...” where we are exploring symbols familiar with Jesus’ journey to the cross and what they represent. This series has so much rich imagery with connections to prophecies as well as historical and cultural significance.

Each week we have looked at something that is symbolic of Jesus’ journey to the cross.



Today, on Palm Sunday, we will be studying Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. It is the beginning of Holy Week...a day of anticipation and expectation.

Triumphal Entry:

The events we will discuss today follow the raising of Lazarus. Read John 12:12-19. We refer to this moment in scripture as the Triumphant Entry. While the crowds celebrated what they believed to be a conquering king, Jesus wept over the condition of the city filled with God’s people (see Luke 19:41).

Jesus then speaks to the crowd. Read John 12:23-27. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, He wasn’t just arriving as King. He was arriving as the Passover Lamb.

Sanctification:

The Lamb is the picture of sanctification. To be sanctified means to be set apart for God’s purposes. Not just forgiven. Not just saved. Set apart and fully surrendered. Sanctification is learning to say: Not my will... but Yours. And the Passover Lamb shows us what that looks like

Isaiah 53 is possibly one of the most read passages this time of year (I highly encourage you to spend some time soaking in this chapter this week but be prepared for it to break you.)

Read Isaiah 53:6-7. The imagery of a sacrificial lamb was such a powerful metaphor for the Israelites. **The lamb serves as a substitute**, taking the place of a person who would otherwise face death for their sins. The shedding of the lamb’s blood acts as a "covering over" or penalty payment for transgressions/iniquity.

Iniquity represents the inner root of corruption and habitual rebellion against God.

Sanctification is the process of being made holy, consecrated, and transformed into the image of Jesus.

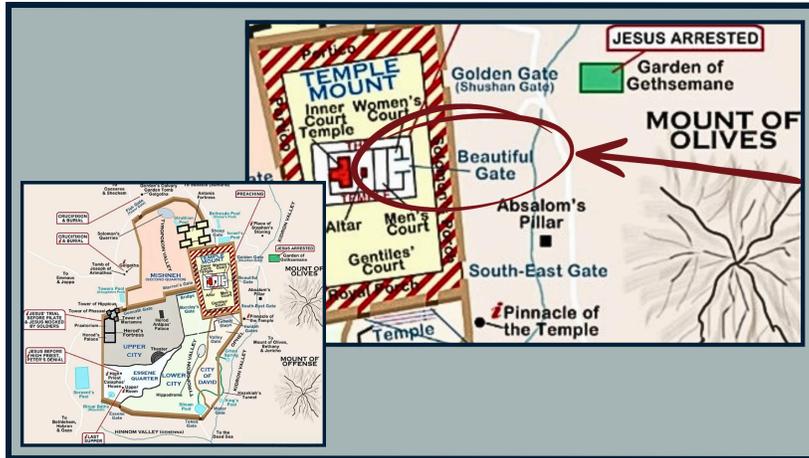
God placed the iniquity of all humanity on Jesus. He willingly accepted the weight of it so we could all have an example of what true surrender looks like.

Palm Sunday is the beginning of the fulfillment of Isaiah 53. The Lamb is entering the city and going straight to the Temple. But how He enters matters...

The Gate:

Jesus entered the city through the Eastern Gate. We have to look back to the prophet Ezekiel to understand the significance of the Eastern Gate

Read Ezekiel 43:1-5. Because of this prophecy, the Jewish people expected that the Messiah would enter from the east. Jesus approaches Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives (from Bethany) and descends toward the Eastern Gate (Beautiful Gate).



This is the direction that: God's glory entered Jerusalem, the Messiah would come, and the King would arrive. He isn't just entering as the King. He is entering as the Lamb!

The Eastern Gate/Beautiful Gate/Golden Gate was also known as the Sheep Gate. It was used by shepherds to bring lambs into Jerusalem. The gate was used to bring sacrifices to the Temple. It was also known as the Sheep Market Gate. This is where lambs destined for sacrifice entered the city.

Jesus enters Jerusalem during Passover when thousands of lambs are being brought in for sacrifice. The Lamb of God enters with the lambs of atonement. The people see the arrival of a King, but God sees the ultimate atoning sacrifice arriving.

We miss a lot of the significance of this simply because we were not raised Jewish, but every Jewish person would understand. It was a perfect parallel to one of their most sacred rhythms/festivals.

Passover Lamb Process:

Since we were not raised Jewish, let's examine the process followed for the Passover lamb.

Step 1: The Lamb was Chosen. Read Exodus 12:3. A lamb was chosen and set apart. It wasn't just put in a separate pen. It was taken into the family's home, completely removed from the flock.

On Palm Sunday, the crowds shout 'Hosanna' (*save us*) and Jesus is publicly identified as the Messiah.

Sanctification begins with being set apart.

Step 2: The Lamb was Examined. Read Exodus 12:5. For four days they were watched and inspected by the family. Any flaw would make it an unacceptable sacrifice.

Jesus was questioned and tested by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Pilate. No fault was found. The Lamb was found to be without flaw or blemish...an acceptable sacrifice.

Sanctification includes refining.

Step 3: The Lamb was Slain. Read Exodus 12:6.

Jesus is arrested, tried, and condemned...not for his own guilt but for the guilt of those He represented. He was the sacrificial lamb serving as the substitute for the iniquity of all humanity.

Step 4: *The Blood was Applied.* Read Exodus 12:7. When the blood of the sacrificial lamb was applied, it showed them as being surrendered and obedient to God. The shadow of death passed over any home covered by the blood.

Sanctification required obedience and surrender.

Step 5: *The Lamb was Received.* Read Exodus 12:8. Everyone was required to participate in the eating of the passover meal.

Read Matthew 26:26.

Sanctification is not observing. It is surrendering and requires participation.

Jesus is the Sanctified Lamb:

Jesus' time in Jerusalem was a direct parallel to the Festival of Unleavened Bread that was done in remembrance of the night that the shadow of death passed over the homes covered by the blood of the sacrificial lamb. The Festival represented God's protection for His people (delivering them from slavery) and the freedom that is only found by surrender and obedience to His will.

Jesus was chosen by the people on Palm Sunday. He was examined and tested during the week, slain at Passover, gave his blood for our cleansing, and encourages us to partake in his redeeming life.

Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane "Not my will... but Yours." Sanctification is becoming like the Lamb, surrendering our will to God.

On Palm Sunday, we remember when the Lamb entered the city through the Eastern Gate. He brought the glory of the presence of God back to the Temple through the path of sacrifice like the lambs brought to die as a substitute for the sins of others

Jesus was chosen, examined, set apart, and led toward surrender. No one fully understood what kind of King He would be. He would not be a conquering king but a sanctified Lamb. He wouldn't be taking power by force, but laying down His life as a substitute for the sins of others. He prayed "Not my will... but Yours."

Our Sanctification:

Because of Jesus, sanctification is possible for us too. God calls us out. He sets us apart, shapes our hearts, and leads us toward surrender. It isn't all at once, but a slow, intentional process. We are transformed over time.

Like the Lamb, we are chosen, examined, refined, and surrendered. And slowly...our will begins to reflect His will.

Picture This:

So, today is not just about celebrating the coming of the King. We behold the Lamb. The Lamb who entered willingly. The Lamb who offered no defense. The Lamb who was set apart. The Lamb who was slain. The Lamb who sanctifies us.

Imagine the road into Jerusalem. Dust rising. People pressing in. Palm branches waving. Voices shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" They think they are welcoming a king, but heaven sees something else. Heaven sees a Lamb.

The prophet Isaiah saw Him first — centuries before this day. *“He was led like a lamb to the slaughter...and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,so He did not open His mouth.”* (Isaiah 53:7)

The Lamb walks forward. Not resisting. Not defending. Not turning back. He walks past the cheers...knowing the same voices will soon fall silent. He walks toward betrayal. Toward suffering. Toward the cross.

“He was pierced for our transgressions...crushed for our iniquities...and by His wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

The crowd sees weakness. But heaven sees worth because **His execution was His exaltation**. The Lamb is lifted up...wounded...slain...silent. And for a moment it looks like the story is over.

But years later, John — the disciple who walked with Jesus, the one who stood near the cross, the one who saw the empty tomb — is given a vision of heaven. And he says, *“I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne.”* (Revelation 5:6)

The Lamb that was led... is now standing. The Lamb that was slain... is now reigning. The Lamb that surrendered... is at the center. And suddenly heaven begins to move. Voices gather. Angels surround the throne. Elders fall down. All of heaven leans in. And they sing, *“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”* (Revelation 5:12)

The sound grows. More voices. More worship. More glory. Then John says every creature joins in — in heaven...and on earth...and under the earth...and in the sea. All creation singing to the Lamb. Not just remembering but worshiping. Because this isn't just a story from long ago. The Lamb who was slain... is still on the throne. The Lamb who was silent... is still worthy. The Lamb who was lifted up... is still reigning.

And the story isn't finished. The Lamb who entered Jerusalem...the Lamb who was slain...the Lamb who is worshiped in heaven...is the Lamb who is coming again. And even now... heaven is still singing. *Worthy. Worthy. Worthy is the Lamb.* He alone is worthy. Worthy of surrender. Worthy of worship. Worthy of everything.

Reflection Questions:

- What stands out to you most about the parallels between the Passover lamb process and Jesus' final week?
- Which step of the lamb process—chosen, examined, slain, applied, or received—do you most relate to in your current season?
- When you picture Jesus as the Lamb—silent, willing, and sacrificial—what stirs in your heart?
- Are there areas of “iniquity” (deep-rooted patterns or attitudes) that God is revealing in you? What is one specific thing you need to lay down before God and trust Him with today?
- In what ways can you move from simply celebrating Jesus to truly surrendering to Him?