

Readings

Scripture

⁹When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

¹²The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" ¹⁴And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ¹⁵"Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" ¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. ¹⁷The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. ¹⁹So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²²Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."

- John 12:9-26 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

To die on the cross means to die despised and rejected of men. Suffering and rejection are laid upon Jesus as a divine necessity, and every attempt to prevent it is the work of the devil, especially when it comes from his own disciples; for it is in fact an attempt to prevent Christ from being Christ. It is Peter, the Rock of the Church, who commits that sin, immediately after he has confessed Jesus as the Messiah and has been appointed to the primacy. That shows how the very notion of a suffering Messiah was a scandal to the Church, even in its earliest days. That is not the kind of Lord it wants, and the Church of Christ does not like to have the law of suffering imposed upon it by its Lord. Peter's protest displays his own unwillingness to suffer, and that means that Satan has gained entry into the Church, and is trying to tear it away from the cross of its Lord.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (p. 87)

Sermon Outline

Loving and Losing
John 12:9-26

Not as the World Gives
Brad Anderson

Jesus offers peace to the world... (John 14:27, 16:33, 12:23-24)

To reflect on this statement further, we will ask three questions:

If Jesus offers peace to the world, then why is the world so hostile toward life? (John 12:9-11)

If Jesus offers peace to the world, then why is the world so threatened by a man riding on a donkey? (John 12:12-19)

If Jesus offers peace to the world, then why does the church so often refuse the peace he offers? (John 12:20-26)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- Have you ever been outdoors in a crowd trying to see a nationally famous person? Who? What was the scene like?
- How would you set this opening scene for TV? What "flashbacks" (e.g., the raising of Lazarus from the dead) would you use as the TV producer to show the crowd now so whipped up, but once so confused and divided (as in John 7:40-43; 10:19-21)?
- How could you tie in their hope that Jesus will do at 'this' Passover what God did at the 'first' Passover?
- Why a lowly donkey for Jesus (see Zechariah 9:9)?
- According to your script, what would the crowds, the disciples, and Jewish leaders be feeling about now? One week later? Had you been there, what would you be feeling: fanaticism, fickleness, faith, or fear? Why?
- What brings Gentiles to Jerusalem during a time of Jewish patriotism?
- What was so unique about their request that Philip would first filter it through Andrew?
- Jesus said several times "his time had not come" (John 2:4; 7:6, 30). What about this request caused him to say that now it has come?
- Read John 12:23-26. In his parable (John 12:24), who is the kernel of wheat? How is this related to the Gentiles' request?
- What convinced you that Jesus is your King? What is the best thing you have seen about the type of king he is?