

March 24, 2024
La Jolla Christian Fellowship
"The Passions of Palm Sunday" (John 12:12-33)
Pastor Jim Smith

INTRO: In today's culture, the word "passion" often suggests excitement, being turned-on or pumped-up, captivated by an interest. In ancient times, however, the Latin root *passio* often meant a willingness to "feel it" in sacrifice – even suffering – for a worthy purpose. Gospel accounts of Jesus' triumphal "Palm Sunday" entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12) reveal both dynamics. Entering Holy Week we embrace God's Word and vision.

1. Celebration moments together are memorable, but fleeting. What's meaningful to preserve?
2. Investigation steps lead us deeper. Questions, study and conversations bring lifelong learning.
3. Dedication prayer: "Our chief human purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." (1647)

THE PASSION OF A PARADE (John 12:12-19)

Celebration by a Jewish crowd as Messiah fulfills the OT promise (Zech. 9:9). Beat the Romans! Gospel writers' preserve the Aramaic cheers/cries "*Hosanna!*" (Save us!) as heartfelt pleas. But there is discord: Pharisees oppose him, mixed crowd motives surface, disappointments...

THE PASSION OF THE PURSUIT (John 12:20-26)

Investigation by the Greeks – desiring to "check out" this mega-teacher & miracle-worker. But "what Jesus" were they looking for? Echoes of John the Baptist and Christ (Matthew 11:8) "The Son of Man glorified" sounds great, but the cost of discipleship and service lies ahead.

THE PASSION OF THE PASSOVER LAMB (John 12:27-33)

Dedication by our Lord Himself – mindful that the price of our deliverance was his suffering. "Now my heart is troubled" brings The Choice which leads to a Last Supper, the Cross and... Jesus' "Glorify your Name" prayer brings the Father's assurance: "I have (past), I will (future)."

[Jesus utterly humbled himself – fully identified with us - during that fateful week not just by riding on a donkey but dying the death of a common criminal to atone for our transgression. Our goal is to share this life-giving good news with as many as possible! - Henri Nouwen]

ENTERING THIS HOLY WEEK: May our eyes be opened (*Ephphatha* Mark 7:34) and hearts cry out for the Lord in "grace and truth" to come upon us (*Maranatha* I Cor. 16:22). As classic films like "King of Kings" (1927), "The Greatest Story Ever Told" (1965) & "The Passion of the Christ" (2004) indicate – and hymns such as "All Glory, Laud & Honor" (ca 820) confirm - approaches vary. But hearing Jesus' call (Mark 12:28ff), may hearts' *affections*, souls' *exertions*, and minds' *reflections* freshly seek and love the Lord (and neighbors) in this Holy Season. It's our turn!

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS: 1)What's your passion? 2)What's your pursuit? 3)What's the price?