

WANDERING HEART: SONGS OF LOUDEST PRAISE

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John 12:12-16

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!” Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: “Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!” His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. The crowd greeting Jesus might have expected a military Messiah or political Christ, someone to finally throw off the yolk of Rome. The shouts echo with words used for past kings returning triumphantly from battle. The palm branches in their hands were like waving a national flag, they were symbols of national pride in that time. How does Jesus unravel those expectations with his entrance, and then with the events leading up to and including his death?
3. How does faith in God through Jesus get warped into national pride and political power in our day and age? Why is it dangerous?
4. Jesus rides in on a donkey, not a war horse (as would be customary). What might this mean theologically—then and now?
5. What expectations of God are you learning to release and “lay down” in this season of life?
6. “Do not be afraid” is not the original quote from the Old Testament (see Zechariah 9:9). So why do you think John might have changed the words?
7. What are some ways that fear infects our lives as individuals and as communities/society, causing us to seek security in power, aggression or force?

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