

*The Way, Week 6*

**FROM HOSANNA TO CRUCIFY HIM**

**Mark 11:7-10, 15:6-15**

How did we get from this [*palm branch*] to this [*cross*]?

On Sunday of Holy Week, Jesus came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey, and the crowds loved him! They laid their coats in the road. They waved Palm branches. They shouted, “*Hosanna!*”

But then on Friday, they didn’t like Jesus anymore. They shouted, “Give us Barabbas! Take Jesus away! *Crucify him!*”

On Sunday, they welcomed Jesus,  
*On Friday, they wanted him gone.*

On Sunday, they blessed Jesus,  
*On Friday, they cursed him.*

On Sunday, they loved Jesus,  
*On Friday, they hated him.*

So, what happened? Why did they go from Hosanna to Crucify Him? I want us to look long and hard at that question this morning, because we might just see ourselves in the Jerusalem crowd.

**First of all, let’s think about why they went out to meet Jesus on Sunday.** The Gospel of John gives us a clue:

*<sup>17</sup> So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify.<sup>18</sup> It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him.*

–John 12:17-18, New Revised Standard Version

So one reason they went out to meet Jesus was that they heard he could do miracles. And that gives us several possible motives that people might have had as they went out on Palm Sunday.

Maybe some went because they wanted to get something from Jesus: “He raised Lazarus, maybe he’ll help me” ... “He helped others, maybe he’ll help me.”

Maybe some went because they wanted to be entertained: “Come on, y’all, let’s go see the miracle worker” ... “I hear he does tricks with fish and bread!” ... “I hear he might tear down the temple and build it back in three days – I wanna see that!”

Maybe some of the people went because everybody else was doing it! They didn't really have a reason. They didn't have a personal commitment. They just wanted to be part of the crowd. It was just the thing to do.

And maybe some went because they hoped Jesus was going to raise up an army. They thought, "Here comes the Messiah we want, the guy who's going to crush our enemies and put us on top!"

So, as long as Jesus is popular; as long as he has entertainment value; as long as he can do something for us; as long as he meets our expectations – then we like him! Then it's Palm Sunday: "Welcome, Jesus! Hosanna!"

**But now let's shift scenes to Friday.** Jesus is arrested and tied up and being held by the police. And all of a sudden, it's not cool to follow Jesus anymore. When Pilate comes out on his balcony and says, "What do you want me to do with Jesus?" they shout, "CRUCIFY HIM!"

You see, at this point it was no longer easy to follow Jesus. On Palm Sunday, it was real easy to pick up a palm branch and join the crowd and watch the parade. But now, on Good Friday, to follow Jesus would mean sacrifice ... self-denial ... being ridiculed ... taking a risk.

They were not willing to do those things, and I wonder – how many of us are not willing to follow Jesus when it means sacrifice ... self-denial ... being ridiculed ... taking a risk.

We love to follow Jesus when it's easy. But what happens when it gets tough?

- What happens when you walk by a homeless person, and you know Jesus wants you to care for the least of these, but you just don't want to get involved?
- What happens when you're going over your finances and you feel called to give, but you'd really rather keep it?
- What happens when you witness racial discrimination, and you know you should say something, but you just don't want to make waves?
- What happens when everybody at the party is telling sexist dirty jokes and you think, "Boy, I'd better laugh along so they don't think I'm a prude."
- What happens when somebody hurts you and you know Jesus wants you to forgive, but you just don't want to?
- What happens when you hear some gossip and you want to pass it on and enjoy talking about other people behind their back?
- What happens when you're arguing with your spouse, and instead of giving a soft answer that turns away wrath, you want to say something hurtful – you want to twist the knife?
- What happens when you're tempted to cheat, or to lie, or to fudge on your taxes, or to sleep with somebody you're not married to?

Will you welcome Jesus into moments like these? Or will you shout “Crucify him!” by what you do?

Christian author Brennan Manning said, *“The single greatest cause of atheism in the world today is Christians: who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door, and deny him by their lifestyles. This is what an unbelieving world finds unbelievable.”*

Let’s put that another way: Far too often, we come to church on Sunday and shout, “Hosanna!” and then we go out and say, “Crucify him!” by the way we live.

### **LET’S BOW OUR HEADS.**

Are you willing to face the ways that you go from Hosanna to Crucify him?

Are you willing to be honest?

Are you willing to say, “Lord, like Judas, I have betrayed you -- like Peter, I have denied you – like the Jerusalem crowd, I have turned against you.”?

Are you willing to confess your sins specifically?

*[Silence]*

Now, keep your head bowed, and listen:

**Though we turn our backs on Jesus, he never turns his back on us.**

And when we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and forgives our sin and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. AMEN.