

John 12-12-26
A different kind of king!
Or
The Triumphal Entry

Preamble:

New books in bookstore, men's retreat...

Sermon introduction:

"On December 4, 1977, in Bangui, capital of the Central African Empire, the world press witnessed the coronation of his Imperial Majesty, Bokassa I. The price tag for that one event, designed and choreographed by French designer Olivier Brice, was \$25 million.

The procession began with eight of Bokassa's twenty-nine official children parading down the royal carpet to their seats. They were followed by Jean Bedel Bokassa II, heir to the throne, dressed in a white admiral's uniform... Catherine followed, the favorite of Bokassa's nine wives. She was wearing a \$73,000 gown.

The emperor arrived in a gold eagle-bedecked imperial coach drawn by six matched Anglo-Norman horses. He wore a thirty-two-pound robe decorated with 785,000 strewn pearls and gold embroidery... As the "Sacred March" concluded, Bokassa seated himself in his \$2.5 million eagle throne. Then a \$2.5 million crown, topped with an 80-carat diamond, was placed upon his head." (K. Hughes)

This was an incredible display of wealth and power. The success of kings, presidents, and heads of state is often measured by the size of their country's GDP, palace, army, car collection, and personal jet. For most kings bigger, flashier, and faster is the norm.

But John 12:12-26 describes a very different type of king. This king breaks all the stereotypes. Instead of demanding to be served, he served others. Instead of living in a castle, he chose to be homeless. Instead of arriving in a gold chariot he arrived on a baby donkey.

He was so different that the crowds misunderstood his mission. Things have not changed much; people still misunderstand his mission. Maybe we misunderstand his mission?

Here is the point...

King Jesus is a different kind of king! Yet he is the king that we need the most.

John 12:12-26 describes the differences.

How is he different than other kings? King Jesus had...

A different kind of mission.
A different kind of glory.
A different kind of subject.

First, King Jesus has a different kind of mission.

To understand his mission was, we need to understand the crowd's mission!

The crowd's mission was political freedom!

John 12:12-13 (ESV) – 12 The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

Several hundred thousand Jewish pilgrims from all over Palestine flooded into Jerusalem every year for the feast of Passover. The large crowd heard that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead a few days earlier. They all wanted to see Jesus the wonder worker. Many hoped he was the long-awaited political messiah.

13 So 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!"

Why the palm branches?

When Simon Maccabaeus drove the Syrians out of Jerusalem and restored the temple one hundred and fifty years earlier, he was honored with waving palms. As a result, palm branches became a symbol for Jewish nationalism and Jewish liberation. Because of this unique history, the Jews associated the palm branch with the promised Messiah. (Phillips)

Furthermore, as the crowd waved the palm branches, they shouted the words of Psalm 118:25, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

The word "Hosanna" means "give salvation now." In other words, the crowd was asking Jesus to save them "now" from Roman oppression. They thought he was Israel's promised warrior King. Since he had power to raise the dead, surely, he had power to save them from Rome. When would he raise an army and attack?

Unfortunately, the crowd misunderstood the mission of King Jesus. How do we know? Just a few days later, the same crowd demands his death after they realize that he is not going to save them from Rome!

Application:

Many people in our culture misunderstand the mission of King Jesus!
Some think that Jesus loves and accepts every person and every behavior no matter what, since "He is a God of love."
Others think that it is Christ's job to forgive us no matter what.
Others think that Jesus is primarily concerned about social justice.
Others think that Jesus is primarily concerned about political oppression.
Still others think that Jesus is primarily concerned about making his followers lives easier.
While others think that Jesus will save everyone in the end.

But as soon as people found out that King Jesus claims to be the only way to God, demands that everyone everywhere repents of their sins and follow him, and promises to judge the world in righteousness, their love for Jesus often morphs into hatred for Jesus.

The crowd misunderstood king Jesus.

Their mission was political freedom! Christ had a different mission. What was it?

Christ's mission was to spread peace through humble service!

John 12:14-15 (ESV) — 14 And 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!"

The donkeys ridden in the Holy Land are nothing like the donkeys bred in the United States today. They're much smaller. They were so small that grown men had to bend their knees, as they rode the donkey, to avoid dragging their feet on the ground.

So instead of entering Jerusalem on a war horse, to conquer Rome, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a lowly donkey, with his knees bent, to self-consciously identify with the messianic prophecy of Zechariah.

Zechariah 9:9-10 (ESV) — 9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. **10** I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. Which meant that he was not exactly what the people had in mind.

They wanted a tall, dark, strong, and handsome king (think king David or King Solomon) to ride into town on a mighty steed, followed by a vast army, to throw off the shackles of Roman oppression.

But Jesus was a different kind of King.

He came not to bring war but to bring peace, through humble service. This was clearly illustrated in his choice of transportation. He chose a lowly beast of burden to make his grand entrance, not a war horse.

Illustration:

When a president, prime minister, or head of state goes to a foreign capital city they drive around in large motorcades. I'm sure you have seen these before.

If the head of state is especially important, the roads are closed for the caravan. The caravan may include five black armored SUVs, followed by five black armored sedans, followed by five more black armored SUVs. In some cases, 10-15 motorcycles are added to the caravan. In still others there may be helicopters flying overhead. All the vehicles are designed to keep the president safe and make sure that everyone notices just how important he or she is.

In light of this, imagine a head of state pulling up the white house with one car—no caravan. The one car is a 1985 Honda Civic with some rust on the side. Nobody would be impressed, and nobody would feel threatened.

The small baby donkey ridden by Jesus was about as impressive as a 1985 Honda Civic. A Roman emperor would have been accompanied by hundreds of chariots, followed by hundreds of calvary, followed by thousands of marching soldiers. Riding into Rome on a baby donkey would have been unthinkable.

Yes, it can be argued from the OT that a donkey was a royal beast, but it was clearly a humble, lowly, and weak animal of peace.

Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a baby donkey? Because he was a different kind of King. He was the king who would bring peace through humble service.

This display of humility even confused his own disciples.

John 12:16–19 (ESV) — 16 His 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.

Application:

When Jesus rode into town on a donkey, he was very clearly signaling to the vast crowds that he was a different kind of king. He did not come to destroy Rome; he came to bring peace through humble service.

Jesus is not a king who exploits his people to enrich himself.
Jesus is not a king who uses his people to protect himself.
Jesus is not a king who extends his reign through violence.

Jesus is the king who brings peace through humble service.

This humble king is the model for all those in positions of power. We lead others by humbling ourselves to serve them. This is exactly what Jesus did.

If you want to bring peace to your family, serve them. How???
If you want to bring peace to your marriage, serve your spouse. How???
If you want to bring peace to your employees, serve them. How???
If you want to bring peace to your neighbors, roommates, classmates, etc...
If you want to bring peace to your school, serve your classmates and teachers.

How did Jesus specifically fulfill his "different mission?" This brings us to the second point.

First, king Jesus had a different kind of mission.

Second, king Jesus had a different kind of glory.

How do most kings display their glory? Through their accumulation of material things and the acquisition of power!

King Bokassa displayed his glory in his 2.5-million-dollar throne, his 2.5-million-dollar crown, his nine wives, his 29 children, and his gold chariot.

King Jesus has a very different way of displaying his glory!

How does Jesus display his glory?

Christ displays his glory through suffering and death!

John 12:20–24 (ESV) — 20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. **21** So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked

him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." **22** Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. **23** And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Several times in John's gospel Jesus says that his hour has not yet come (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). But now, his hour has finally come. He will be glorified. But how? Let's keep reading.

24 Truly, 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.

Jesus Christ is talking about his death and resurrection. Which means that he will be glorified through his death and resurrection. What is God's glory? God's glory is the shining forth of all his glorious attributes (describe).

The cross followed by the resurrection is the place where the glory of God is seen most clearly. In the cross we see "A Harmony of Divine Attributes." Explain...

Christ displays his glory through his suffering and death.

Furthermore, Christ displays his glory as he bears "much fruit."

24 Truly, 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.

When a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it eventually produces fruit. If it does not die in the ground, it will not produce fruit.

Because of Christ's life, death, and resurrection billions of people will be saved all over the world. This is foreshadowed in verse 19, when the Pharisees lament, "The world has gone after him" (12:19).

This is foreshadowed again in verses 20-22 as the Greeks seek Jesus.

John 12:20-22 (ESV) — 20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. **21** So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." **22** Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

With the mention of the Greeks, we are given a preview of the stupendous harvest of nations that has been secured by the death of Jesus.

His death will bear fruit in Nigeria, China, Canada, Ethiopia, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe. He will bear fruit in every age and in every nation. According to the book of Revelation, people from every tribe, and tongue and nation will worship King Jesus for all eternity (Revelation 5).

Application:

How does King Jess display his glory? His glory shines brightest in his death on the cross.

He is also glorified in the fruit of the cross. Fruit from all the nations and fruit in your own life.

Jesus died on the cross so that all your sins could be forgiven. But it does not stop there. He also died to give you everything you need to display his glory through godly conduct.

His death broke the power of sin in you.

His death enables you to be filled with the spirit.

His death ensured that his law would be written on your heart.

He died to give you everything you need to live a life that is pleasing to him.

We glorify him as the spirit of God increasingly conforms us into Christ's image. His life, death, and resurrection make this possible.

This is why you are still alive. You are alive to glorify God.

Furthermore, Jesus wants to use you, yes you, to help him bear fruit. Wow!!!

Jesus wants to bear fruit in your family, office, gym, and neighborhood. Who has God recently placed in your life?

As we faithfully share the gospel, we have confidence that men and women will respond in faith because King Jesus said that his death would bear "much fruit."

Jesus is a different king of king.

king Jesus had a different kind of mission.

king Jesus had a different kind of glory.

Third, King Jesus has a different kind of mandate.

King Jesus mandates that we must lose our lives to save them.

John 12:25-26 (ESV) — 25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **26** If 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.

Verse 25 highlights one of the paradoxes of the kingdom.

Jesus says, "Whoever loves his life loses it..." In other words, if we love this life of sin more than Jesus, we will miss the joy of heaven.

Jesus also says, "Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life..." In other words, if we are willing to take up our crosses and die to sin, which we often hate doing, we will spend eternity with Jesus.

Here is the point....

It makes no sense to trade 80-90 years of disobedience for an eternity of unspeakable Joy in Christ's majestic kingdom.

Illustration:

Imagine walking through the downtown mall.

A guy walks up to you and says, "I'm giving you two options and only two options. He looks pretty serious, so you listen. Option one, you can inject this heroin into your arm. When you do, it will feel really, really, good for about twenty minutes. Then you will be a heroin addict the rest of your life. It will never ever satisfy you. You will always want more. Then you will steal from your friends and sell your body. And then you will die in a gutter, poor, dirty, and friendless. That is your first option.

Option two, If you run up and down the escalators for twenty minutes, I will give you an entire island in the Caribbean. The island comes with a mansion, a beach, a golf course, tennis courts, a pool, a personal trainer, a famous chef, a fleet of boats, an airstrip for your gulf stream and enough rooms for all your friends. But to get it, you will have to work really hard on the escalators for about twenty minutes."

Which option would you chose? You would choose option two. Why? A little bit of pain will lead to long term pleasure.

Every analogy breaks down... we can't earn heaven. Christ offers it to us freely. But the path to heaven is often difficult. But in light of eternity, our whole life seems like twenty minutes.

Application:

Here is the point...

In God's kingdom we must lose our lives to save them.

George Müller was an incredibly effective servant of God. When someone asked him, "What has been the secret of your life?" Müller hung his head and said, "There was a day when I died." Then he bent lower and said, "Died to George Müller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of brethren or friends." (K. Hughes)

We will not experience any kind of true and lasting joy or ministry success until we are willing to die. Christ the king is the trailblazer. His death brought life, and our death brings life.

To truly live...

We must die to our sinful lusts and passions.

We must die to protecting our reputations.

We must die to selfish living.

We must die to stinginess.

We must die to fear of man.

We must, motivated by grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit, die to everything that hinders us from glorifying king Jesus.

This is the way of the kingdom. This is the way of life, real life, abundant life.

Conclusion:

Christ is a very different kind of King who rules a very different kind of kingdom. Let me conclude by reading a poem that compares Jesus Christ with Alexander the great.

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three, One died in Babylon and one on Calvary.
One gained all for self, and one Himself He gave.

One conquered every throne, the other every grave.

When died the Greek, forever fell his throne of swords, But Jesus died to live forever Lord of lords.

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three.

The Greek made all men slaves, the Jew made all men free.

One built a throne on blood, the other built on love.

The one was born of earth, the other from above.

One won all this earth to lose all earth and Heaven.

The other gave up all that all to Him be given.

The Greek forever died, the Jew forever lives. (Charles Ross Weed)

Let me ask you one last question, why in the world, would you not want to follow king Jesus? Let's pray...