

# Small Group Study: Palm Sunday

Text: Matthew 21:1–17

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## Session Goals

- **Main Idea:** Jesus reveals a kingdom that removes barriers and restores access to God.
  - **Head Change:** Understand the difference between the expected conquering King and the restoring King Jesus reveals Himself to be.
  - **Heart Change:** Recognize where we may misunderstand Jesus or resist His disruptive work.
  - **Life Change:** Join Jesus in removing barriers and welcoming others into God's presence.
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## 1. OPENING QUESTION (Icebreaker)

- Have you ever expected something to go one way—but it turned out completely different? How did you respond?
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## 2. READ THE PASSAGE

Read **Matthew 21:1–17** together.

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## 3. SEE THE KING CLEARLY (Understanding Jesus)

### Observation & Interpretation

- What details stand out to you about how Jesus enters Jerusalem?
- What do the crowd's cries of "Hosanna" reveal about their expectations?
- What contrasts do you see between Jesus' entry and the kind of power represented by Rome (or Pilate)?

### Deeper Reflection

- The sermon highlighted this tension: *"It is possible to praise Jesus loudly—and misunderstand Him completely."*
  - Why do you think this is true?
  - What kind of Messiah were the people expecting—and how is Jesus different?

### Application

- In what ways might we unintentionally shape Jesus into the kind of King we want Him to be?
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## 4. WHEN PRAISE TURNS TO DISRUPTION

### Observation

- What does Jesus do when He enters the temple? What reasons does He give?

### Understanding the System

- Based on the sermon, how had the temple become a place of **restriction instead of access**?
- Who specifically was being excluded or pushed to the margins?

### Reflection

- Why do you think Jesus responds so strongly here?
- What does this tell us about God’s heart for people—especially outsiders?

### Illustration Connection

- The “ice cream shop with too many rules” image:
    - How does that help you understand what the temple had become?
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## 5. JESUS REORDERS THE SPACE

### Observation

- What happens immediately after Jesus clears the temple? (v.14–16)
- Who comes to Jesus? Who begins to praise Him?

### Reflection

- Why is it significant that the **blind, lame, and children** are highlighted here?
- What does this moment reveal about the kind of kingdom Jesus is bringing?

### Key Insight

- How do you see this pattern:
    - **Access replacing exclusion**
    - **Healing replacing restriction**
    - **Unexpected people leading worship**
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## 6. EXAMINE OURSELVES

### Personal Reflection

- Where might I be praising Jesus—but resisting the kind of King He actually is?
  - Do I prefer a “conquering” Jesus (control, comfort, quick fixes) over a “restoring” Jesus (humility, disruption, transformation)?
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## 7. IDENTIFY THE BARRIERS

### Personal Level

- What barriers might exist in your own life that hinder your relationship with God? (fear, shame, busyness, assumptions, etc.)

### Church/Community Level

- What barriers might exist in our church or culture that make it difficult for people to encounter God?

### Honest Discussion

- Are there groups of people today who might feel like the “Gentiles,” “outsiders,” or “unwelcome” in church spaces?

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## 8. JOIN THE WORK OF JESUS

### Application

- Jesus is still clearing space and welcoming people—what might it look like for you to join Him in that work?

### Practical Steps

- Who is one person you could intentionally welcome, include, or make space for this week?
- What is one barrier you could help remove—in your life or for someone else?

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## 9. CLOSING REFLECTION

- Which part of this passage or discussion challenged you the most?
- What is one thing you sense God asking you to do in response?