

Series: **Individual message: Palm Sunday 2024**
Title: **Who Am I in the Story?**
Text: **John 12:12-26, 36-37; 42-43**

Introduction - Dressed for the Day

Dressed for the Part – I like to be a part of the Day.

I wear Seahawks shirt on Fridays.

- Christmas – Christmas tree vest
- Valentine’s Day – Red
- St Patrick’s Day – Green
- Easter – Resurrection Tie
- April 5th - Star Trek day – Vulcans first Contact
 - Sept. 8 – Star Trek Shirt – (first day aired)
- May the Fourth – Star Wars Shirt
- Palm Sunday – Hawaiian Shirt and a garment to throw

I want to be a part of the Happening.

Context – Lazarus has been raised from the dead.

- The Triumphant Entry
 - Clearly messianic. The Golden Gate is located in the north section of the east wall of the Temple Mount. In Jewish belief, the gate is called 'The Gate of Mercy' (*Sha'ar HaRakhamim*), and is considered to be the place from which the Messiah will enter in the end of days.
- Secures a donkey to fulfill prophecies spoken of the Messiah.

John 12:12-26, 36-37; 42-43 (ESV)

¹² *The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 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!” 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!”*

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. ¹⁷ The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸ The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”*

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. 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. 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.*

36-37

³⁶ *When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. ³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him...*

42-43

⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

There were a lot of people who wanted to be part of the Day.

Let's look at the people in the story and see who we might relate to in the story

Who Am I in this Story?

Am I one of the Followers?

John 12:17

The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness.

- Who they were
 - Disciples and those who were at Lazarus' resurrection.
 - They had been with Jesus.
 - They had witnessed miracles.
 - They had ideas about whom and what Jesus was, and what He would do to bring freedom from oppression of Rome.

How about you and I

- We follow Him.
- We have seen His hand in our lives.
- We believe.
- Yet we may have preconceived ideas about who He is and what He will do.
 - Note that all of these followers abandoned Jesus.
 - It came down to eleven who would stay with Him – and yet they rejected Him, they dismissed Him; they lied and said they did not know Him.
 - We may see Jesus as one who will care for all of our needs.
 - We may want Jesus to take care of issues that he allows us to go through.
 - What then?
 - Do we depart? Do we walk away?
 - Or do we say as Peter said, "Where else do we go? You alone have the words of eternal life."

Am I one of the Seekers?

John 12:18

The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

- Who they were
 - They came to see Him.
 - The crowd had heard of the raising of Lazarus.
 - They wanted to see a sign.
 - Their knowledge of Jesus was here say, what others had seen and witnessed.

12:37 – *Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him.*

- They saw Him but did not believe in Him.
- They got to see signs and miracles – but that was not enough to get them to give their lives to Jesus.

How about you and I?

- Am I here because of an invitation from a friend?
- Am I here because of the godly life my parent or grandparent lived?
- Possibly the words Jesus says in verse 25 about losing our life is sufficient to hold us back from a commitment to Him.
 - *'Whoever loves his life loses it; and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.'*
- John says, *'they went out from us, because they were never of us.'* (1 Jn. 2:19)
- He contrasts these seekers to those who are anointed and have the knowledge.
 - *'But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.'* (1 Jn. 2:20)

Am I one of the Religious Control Freaks?

- Pharisees

They came to kill him

John 12:10-11

¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

- Jesus was getting in their way.
- He was teaching things that would hinder their way of life.
- He was showing things that did not jive with their religious practices and beliefs.
- Maybe we have a hard heart and want nothing to do with Jesus because He will get in the way of our lives.

They were losing ground (control)

John 12:19

So the Pharisees said to one another, *"You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."*

- We are not gaining here...we are losing ground.
 - This is not going well for our needs, our way of life, our practices.
 - His teaching is being seen by the world as something to pursue ...but they are not going through our litmus test as to who is "in" and who is "out."

Some believed in private

- Believe, yet hide for fear of men and consequences.

John 12:42

⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

How about you and I?

- Are we holding onto control so tightly that Jesus' truths are in the way of our desired freedom?
 - Our desired life
 - Our way of living and serving Him
 - Are we rewriting the way it means to live for Jesus, not taking His words into account?
- Have we come to a place of belief but will not confess it out of fear of being cancelled?
 - Do we want the likes, the follows, the influence that comes from going with the naysayers rather than being clear as to Whom we serve and Who he is?

Am I one of the outsiders? – Foreigners (Greeks)

John 12:20-21

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.”

- The people we have seen before have all been Jews
 - They know the Torah.
 - They have followed the traditions of Moses.
 - But here we have Greeks – Gentiles.
 - They do not have the religious background to work through.
 - They were not thinking of religious practices – They just wanted to see Jesus.
 - This is more like you and I than possibly any of the others.
 - They wanted to see Jesus.
 - They come to Philip who tells Andrew and they tell Jesus.
 - “Hey, Jesus! These Gentiles want to come and see you.”
 - Jesus says (12:25-26) “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 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.”
 - Jesus begins to speak about the troubling hour of his impending sacrifice and speaks out loud,
 - (vs. 27-28) “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.”
 - A thunderous voice from heaven
 - “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”
 - Jesus says,
 - Judgement of the world is come
 - The son will be lifted
 - Do not let darkness overtake you
 - (v. 36) “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”
 - They saw Jesus, they heard Jesus, and they witnessed something amazing.
 - Though they had seen these things, they did not believe for their eyes were blinded.
 - Their hearts were hardened.

How about you and I?

- Maybe you have no church or religious background and you simply want to see Jesus.
 - You may have heard the stories, heard messages and testimonies of how Jesus has changed lives.
 - Yet, push comes to shove, giving yourself completely to the Lord is too high of a price for you to pay.
 - The word spoken, the Lord revealed, yet they would not believe.
- Let us not be like these people.
 - Let our hearts be softened, and our eyes opened, that we might believe on Him.

Am I the donkey?

John 12:14-15

And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

“Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!”

- A fulfilled prophecy from Zechariah 9 and Isaiah 62
- Corrie Ten Boom was a famous Christian whose testimony of suffering in Nazi concentration camps and God’s grace through it all touched millions of lives. A few years ago, in a press conference following a ceremony in which Corrie Ten Boom was given an honorary degree, one of the reporters asked her if it was difficult

remaining humble while hearing so much acclaim. She replied immediately, “Young man, when Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the back of a donkey, and everyone was waving palm branches and throwing garments in the road and singing praises, do you think that for one moment it ever entered the head of that donkey that any of that was for him?” She continued, “If I can be the donkey on which Jesus Christ rides in his glory, I give him all the praise and all the honor.”

- Now, she compared herself to a donkey not me. Can we learn from the illustration?
 - The donkey’s great role was to lift up Christ and carry Him to His most glorious work.
 - This is the same purpose, which makes the story of our lives worth telling.
 - Apart from Christ the story of our lives is not much more than ashes to ashes, dust to dust, but as we serve Christ our story is transformed.
 - We become a part of God’s great purpose in human history; our lives are stitched into the mosaic of God’s purpose to elevate Christ to the supreme position in the universe.
- Can you embrace as happily as this borrowed donkey the role of magnifying Christ?

Let’s ask ourselves:

Who am I in the story?

- Let’s not be like those who follow and then abandon.
- Let’s not be those who seek Him but do not believe.
- Let’s not be the ones who hold onto our control.
- Let’s not be the ones who secretly believe but don’t want others to know.

Let’s choose:

To follow The Christ and not the one I create for myself.

To love Christ and not hide that I follow Him.

To worship Christ by walking in His Light.

To live for Christ by serve Him with my life.

To lift up Christ and carry Him to his most glorious work.

I am going to
Dress for the Day

Put on Christ

Gal. 3:25-29

²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave or free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.