

What Are You Doing Here? | John 12:12-19

Bro. Ricky

I don't know about you, but on Sunday morning, my Bible just naturally opens to the book of Hebrews. So this morning, you're going to have to turn back a little bit because we're going to open our Bibles on this Palm Sunday to John chapter 12, John chapter 12. Many, many times when we gather on Palm Sunday, we look at either Mark's gospel, which was written first in Aramaic, or Matthew and Luke, and we bring a message from those synoptic gospels to talk about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

This year, I hope you don't mind, but we're not going to use one of the three synoptic authors. But we're going to look at the gospel of John. John writes years later.

He writes as an older minister of the Lord, and he has a different perspective on Palm Sunday than the other authors do. I want to make sure we understand this. The gospels are not just historical narratives teaching facts about the life of Christ.”

Yes, they are historical narratives, and they are very factual. But each writer has a purpose in writing his gospel, and that's why they're a little different, even though the first three are called synoptic, because they are very similar. Matthew and Luke, when they wrote their gospel, followed the gospel chronology of Mark.

John, because the church already has those first three gospels, doesn't see the need of presenting the narrative of Christ in the same order. Therefore, it's just a little bit different. And I'm excited about what we're going to learn this morning from the gospel of John.

Now, can I show this question? Have any of you ever had somebody show up to your house and you say this to them? What are you doing here?

I mean, you're surprised. You know they didn't just casually come to your house. There is a purpose for them being here, and you want to know right off the bat.

What are you doing here? John is writing, to answer the question that we all have, what is Jesus doing riding that donkey into Jerusalem? I hope I can help you clearly see what John intends.

The next day, the large crowd that had come to the feast, verse 12, heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 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.

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

So the Pharisees said to one another, you see that you are gaining nothing. But look, the world has gone after him. Father, we come before you again on this first day of a brand new week, and Father, we are so excited to be here.

Father, you know I have said this many, many times to our congregation, but Sunday at Hardin reminds me of Sunday at Granny Bogard's. We had such a big family, we couldn't all gather around the table at the same time, so we had to eat in shifts. And that's why we have to do it at Hardin.”

Our table just isn't big enough to get us all around it. So Father, some of us eat at 8, some of us eat now at 9.30, others of us will eat at 11. But Father, thank you that in this area, spiritually people love being part of a big family.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, Father, for this honor. And Father, you know we've gathered to eat, feast on your word, and you know this morning I get to be the cook, so to speak. Father, you know how humbled I am?

You know how nervous I get? Oh, Father, what a passage. So Father, I'm asking you to anoint me with your Holy Spirit, remind me of those things I've studied.

Please help me present this accurately and with a practical point. And Father, you know my heart. I don't want to be a speaker only.

I want to be a doer of what I'm going to talk about this morning. I know everyone's heart here also. No one wants to be a hearer only.

We want to be doers of your word. So Father, anoint me and anoint this congregation. And Father, bring to our mind anything in our life that we might need to deal with this morning.

And then Father, help us this week be used to bring honor and glory to you, because Father, we believe right now you're getting us ready for what you've got ready for us this next week. Thank you, Father, for this Palm Sunday. It's in your precious son's name we pray.

Amen, you may be seated.

I just want to draw your attention. Verse 12, John says, the next day.

I mean, I expect a little more fanfare for Palm Sunday than John just saying the next day. See, John begins this narrative telling us in the first verse of chapter 12 that it's six days before the Passover and six days before the Passover on a Saturday, Jesus went back to the house of his friend Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead, and Martha was serving, Mary anointed his head. They had that discrepancy with Judas, who questioned the motive.

And then the Bible tells us there's this large crowd of people who had come to the feast. They now hear Jesus is in Bethany, and they come. And they don't come just because of Jesus being there, but they come because of Lazarus.

Because Jesus has raised him from the dead. And then we discover that there's this plot. The Jewish leaders are actually plotting to get rid of Jesus.

They want to kill him because he's got such a popular following. But we also discover they want to get rid of Lazarus.

Wow.

Lazarus has many people now following Jesus because of what Jesus did in his life.

Just let that sink in just for a moment. Now John says it's the next day. If I'm doing the math right, this is now the 5th day before Passover, so it's what we call Palm Sunday.

And again, John records there's a large crowd of people at the feast. And they've heard Jesus is coming to the feast. So they gather palm branches, and they run out to meet him.

Now, John gets right to the point, he doesn't give us a lot of details, like the synoptic gospels do, about them laying them on the ground. He just says they come with palm branches. Now, we need to understand that this would have been similar to you and I gathering together for some kind of political something going on, and we want everybody to know how proud we are to be an American.

So we raise our American flag and we wave it back and forth because all of us have American flag on a pole. We're so proud to be an American citizen, correct? Well, the Jews were proud to be Jews, but they didn't use flags, they used palm branches.

And now Jesus is coming into the city, they meet him with palm branches, and they cry out one of the hololive hymns, Psalm 18. Hosanna. God save.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the king of Israel. And then I love what John says, so Jesus found a donkey.

Duh.

I mean, I thought from the synoptic gospels, he arranged to have a donkey before he ever came into the city, and he sent his disciples to get right the donkey, and now he comes into the city on a donkey. If I'm reading John, not that he's wrong, but it sounds like he just found a donkey. Sounds like everybody comes out with their palm branches.

John doesn't say if they're waving them, just says they've got the palm branches. They're crying out, God save. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And Jesus goes, oh yeah, I better. And he goes and finds a donkey, gets on the donkey. But John says to fulfill Zechariah chapter 9 verse 9, rejoice Zion, rejoice Israel, for your king comes riding on the back of a donkey, the colt of a donkey.

Wow.

Now watch this. This is amazing. Y'all ready?

Next thing John tells us, his disciples don't get it. Duh. Boy, this gives hope to me, right?

I don't get it a lot of times.

Are you kidding me?

You've been with Jesus for three years? He's now coming into the city on the back of a donkey to fulfill what the Old Testament talks about, and you're a person of the book, and you don't get it?

And then John tells us that they don't get it till after his glorification. Then they go back and, oh yeah, I remember, here's what the Old Testament talked about. This had to be done to him.

And can I remind you, John was one of the disciples who didn't get it. And they didn't get it until when? When he was glorified.

Now watch this. A nugget of truth that John tells us that the other writers don't tell us. Those people in the crowd that were following him, who had seen him raise the dead from the dead, continued to bear witness.

So there was a lot of other people there that day who had heard he had done this sign. Now I need to fast forward. In John chapter 20, John states the reason he's writing this gospel narrative.

He's writing because Jesus did many signs, and some of the signs he does are not recorded in this book, but the ones that he has recorded, he's recorded these signs so that we might believe Jesus is the son of God, and that by believing, we might have life in his name. So watch this. In John's gospel, when John says this is a sign,

the purpose of that sign is so that people might believe, and that might believe in, they come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, and they have eternal life.

Does that make sense? Now watch this.

There's a whole large crowd of people that are following Jesus, meeting Jesus, because they've heard about what he did with Lazarus. He raised him from the dead. And now a large group of people recognize it was Jesus who raised him from the dead, and they now want to come and meet Jesus.

Now, can we stop here just for one second?

Have you, like Lazarus, experienced a resurrection from the dead?

Whoa, glory. Amen.

For 13 years, I was spiritually dead. And on March 24th, 1974, God resurrected me from the grave. Jesus reached down and personally birthed new life into me.

Have you experienced that resurrection? Have you ever thought about this? Why would God save you?

And why would God save me? Is it possible He saved you and He saved me to be a sign to someone else of who Jesus Christ really is? Now, can I ask this question?

You answered it in your mind. How many people are now following Jesus because they know what He did in your life?

One, two, three, four.

Small group of people?

Pretty good group of people? How many here could honestly say, there's a large crowd of people checking out Jesus? Because they've heard what God did in my life.

And so they're checking him out.

Not what we normally think about on Palm Sunday, agreed? But John, not a young gun anymore. He's an old man.

And he's looking back, realizing the church has an accurate historical account of the life of Christ, penned by Mark, Matthew, and Luke. And he's got just a little different purpose in writing his gospel. He wants us to see the signs.

And by seeing the signs, come to believe Jesus is the Son of God, and the moment we believe, we receive eternal life. Now watch this. Because of Lazarus, there are so many people following Jesus now that the Pharisees talk among the one another and go, our plan's not working.

One points to the other one and says, you're not gaining anything. You're not gaining anything. And then they say this, the world has gone after him.

From their perspective as a Jew who's a religious leader, it looks like to them, the world they know is going after Jesus. Now I want you to see what John does. Because see, to the Jew, like many of us, it was all about them.

Blows my mind how people who follow God can believe life's about them. And that's what the Jews thought. We're seeing it more and more and more and more and more in Christian churches in America and in our nation.

Wow.

Now, here's what John's going to do. John's now going to do something that the other writers don't do. All of a sudden, John tells us that there's some Greeks there.

And these Greeks come to Philip, and they ask him, hey, we would like to meet Jesus.

We'd like to talk to him.

And Philip, like some of us, didn't know what to do. So he goes and gets his brother Andrew, and together they come to Jesus. I want you to watch this.

Please hear this. When Jesus heard Andrew and Philip say, there's some Greeks who want to talk with you. Now, I have to be really careful here, because I want to tell you what I think John's trying to do.

Any of you who have been with Brother Ricky for very long know that I'm from Dexter, Kentucky. Proud to be from Dexter, Kentucky. But when I was raised in Calloway County, when I was raised as a young kid, to be from Dexter, Kentucky was kind of looked down upon.

I can only say this because I'm from Dexter. There was the other side of the county, and then there was from Dexter. And if you were from Dexter, Kentucky, you realized you were on the other side of the tracks, and your side of the track wasn't the good side of the track.

And so when you told people where you was from, that you were from Dexter, people just kind of, Dexter?

Yeah.

I think John is kind of using this term Greek, because the Jews would have looked at the people who were Greek, like some Calloway County people look at us from Dexter.

And now John's letting us know there's some people from Dexter who want to talk to Jesus.

And here's what Jesus says.

The hour has come for the son of man to be glorified.

Woo, glory.

Up until this time, every time we've been reading in John's gospel, it would seem like the religious leaders were about to get Jesus. They were trying to trap him. They were going to kill him.

And then John would always say he would escape because his hour had not yet come. And now Jesus, listen to this. When he hears that Greeks, Gentiles, to a Jew, you were either the Jewish or you were Gentile.

When he hears that Gentiles are wanting to talk with him, he lets everyone know the hour for the Son of Man to be glorified has come.

Can I give you a hint if you're not getting it? The Jewish leaders missed it when they said the world is going after him. It wasn't a world of Jews only that Jesus came to save.

He came to save people from every tribe, tongue, and people group.

And if you're like me this morning, you are waving your hands before the Lord, so thankful that he came to save Gentiles, because that's me, I'm a Gentile from Dexter, Kentucky.

He didn't just come to save those people who were born in the Middle East, who could physically trace their ancestry back to a man named Abraham, who had received a covenant from God at Mount Sinai.

Uh-uh.

He came to save Jews and Gentiles, and take down that middle wall of partition between us, and create one new body that's not racial, that's not prejudice, prejudicial.

No.

And create a new body, a church, and place his Holy Spirit not in a physical building, in the city of Jerusalem, but in his house all over the world.

Here's what he said. Can I quote the King James? Verily, verily, I know ESV says truly, truly, that just don't cut it.

Sorry. Verily, verily, to Jesus' disciples, that would mean, hey guys, get your spiritual antenna up. I'm getting to say something really important.

Take out your notepad and your pencil, write this down. Don't forget what I'm going to say. Verily, verily, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Y'all know I'm getting older. You know, I'm a farm kid from Dexter, and this morning I reached into my jar at my house, and I picked up a corn kernel, and I held that corn kernel in my hand, and I looked at it.

And then I know if I don't plant that kernel of corn, it's gonna stay like it is forever. But if I would take it out of my palm and put it in the ground, and it dies, so to speak, it can produce an ear that can have between six and seven hundred individual different kernels on it. And I forgot to put it in my pocket.

Because if I was younger right now, I would reach into my pocket and I'd pull out that kernel of corn. So just imagine I've got a kernel of white corn in my hand.

See it?

We've got tractors pulling planters. This past week, they've been running up and down the roads, in the fields, planting soybeans. A few are planting corn.

Because that's what that farmer knows.

If you don't put that seed in the ground, it can never multiply and produce more bush.

Now, I wish Jesus hadn't of done what he does next. But before he tells us how troubled his soul is, he says, if a man loves his life, he'll lose it.

But if you hate your life, you'll save it in this world. And if you hate your life, you'll lose it in this world for eternal life.

My servants, they follow me. And where I am, that's where my servant will be. And those who serve me, my father will honor.

Jesus, what are you doing here?

You're telling me that, like a grain of wheat, you've got to fall into the ground, you've got to die, you've got to be buried. Or your life, as great as it is, will never influence or affect anybody else's life.

So, you're basically telling me, you didn't love your life.

You didn't come here for this to be about you, you came here for this to be about me. Not me, a Jew, who had the special revelation of God, but me, a Greek, who only had your revelation in nature. So, that I would understand, if I make this life about me, and I'm into this for me, it may look like I'm winning, but I'm gonna lose.

I'm gonna lose big time.

But if I'll reject everything the world throws at me for life to be about me and I'll reject me, and want to live for your honor and your glory, I'll keep my life eternally.

And here's what you're telling me. If I'm gonna be your servant, I gotta follow you. And Lord, I remember what you did.

You died.

And in dying, you trusted your father to raise you back alive. So you know what I'm gonna do as your servant, as a follower of you? I'm gonna die to me.

And I'm gonna trust I'm gonna become the one you have raised me to be. So that where you are, that's where I will be too. And one day, because I'm your servant, I'm your slave, your father is gonna honor me.

Where are you? Is your life about you?

Not the one who died for you on that cross.

What kind of sign are you? Has there been one that's seen it? Maybe two?

Maybe three? Maybe four? Maybe five?

Maybe six?

Jesus says, My soul is troubled.

Am I gonna ask God? No. I'm not gonna ask him to save me from this hour.

It was for this hour I came. So here's what he says, Father, I want you to glorify your name. And all of a sudden, God speaks.

This is the third time. He spoke at his baptism. He spoke when he's on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Now he speaks again. I have glorified it, I'm gonna glorify it again. Some said it thundered, others said, wow, is that an angel speaking?

And Jesus said, hey, this voice wasn't for me, it was for you.

Are you hearing this?

This isn't Friday.

This isn't him on a cross or in the Garden of Gethsemane.

This isn't him taking up, saying, this is the blood of the new covenant which is shed for many from his sin. This is Palm Sunday.

He's already an agony.

Not because he's going to go to cross and die a physical death called crucifixion, which we'll talk about Friday, please come.

Please come.

We call it Good Friday, but it wasn't good for him.

You know what he was troubled about? On that cross during that moment of crucifixion, there would be a time when the sun would refuse to shine, when the sun saw what the sin of man did to the Son of God. And God laid the sin of the whole world on him, and he became sin.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

He knew why, but he wanted us to know why, to fulfill Psalm 22. See, at that moment on that cross, an infinite God who became man in a moment of time faced the inner, infinite punishment of God.”

Can you imagine the intensity of what I should bear for eternity being laid on Jesus in three hours and not just mine, but yours and the sin of the whole world?

He's gonna bear it. Because now the world is gonna be judged, and the rule of this world is gonna be cast out. Satan's gonna be once and for all defeated.

You say, Brother Ricky, the Bible, I know he walks to and fro upon the planet, but here's what Jesus is talking about. Now, Satan cannot deceive any unbeliever to stay in unbelief.

Wow. Wow.

Their eyes can be clearly open because of the good news of Jesus Christ when the light of God shines into their heart. He said, and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all peoples to myself.

Wow.

That included Dexter, Kentucky. That includes every nation, every people group, every tribe, every time.

This he spoke to signify what kind of death he would die.

Cursed is he who hangs on a tree, and he became a curse. Your curse.

This crowd didn't ask him to lead them through a sinner's prayer. They said, hold on, how can this be? I thought the son of man is supposed to live forever, so how can he die?

Who is this son of man?

They just don't get it. So, look what Jesus does in these next verses. So Jesus said to them, The light is among you for a little while longer.

Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he's going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.

Did that hit you?

Jesus wants them to see who he is. He is the light that has come from God.

And we live in a world of darkness. He doesn't want us to let the darkness overcome us. He wants it to be set free from the darkness, and he says if we believe in him, we'll actually become sons of...

Oh, glory.”

God decided to turn the light on in Dexter, Kentucky, and Ammo, Kentucky, and Hardin, Kentucky, and Murray, Kentucky, and Benton, Kentucky, and all around the world. And you know who He shines the light on? His followers who believe in Him as the Son of God, who is the light of the world.

Oh, glory.

Now, can I just ask you a question? Has anybody ever turned the light on when you didn't want the light turned on, and you told them to turn it off?

Any of you ever been doing something in the light, and somebody accidentally or intentionally turns the light off, and you turn the light on? Oh, listen to me.

When you become a son of light, there's gonna be some people in your family who don't want your light to shine on them.

And they're gonna try to turn you off. They're gonna pull the window shade down. Relationships are just gonna be a little different because they want to remain in darkness.

You can't. It's not who you are. You're gonna have some friends.”

Not gonna be friends anymore. They're never gonna tell you why, but you're gonna know why. Because you've been set free from the darkness.

They love the darkness. They don't love the light. So, they're gonna turn you off.

At work, you're not gonna be the most popular guy in the break room anymore. Because you ain't telling the jokes you used to tell. And you're not laughing at what you used to laugh at.

See, you gotta hear me say this. Palm Sonja is about God's desire to use you as a son of light, so that we will be assigned to others of who Jesus is. And if they would just come to know him, after maybe knowing us and seeing what he's done in our life, then they too could come to know him as Lord and Savior and be a son of light and be set free from the darkness.

Now, Jesus said these things and then he departed and hid himself. Though he had done so many signs before them, they didn't believe. And then he tells us so that the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.

This is a reference to Isaiah 53 and Isaiah chapter 6.

And Isaiah chapter 53, he just asked, Lord, who has believed our report? Lord, who has believed this good news that you're going to send this suffering servant? But in Isaiah 6, y'all remember that?

Isaiah goes into the temple the morning of the death of the king, and he sees the Lord high and lift up the train of his robe, fulfilling the temple. The doorpost of the temple shook because of the holiness of God. He saw the seraphim singing, holy, holy, holy to each other is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory.

Can you imagine being a young statesman like Isaiah, and you now are in the presence, Lord, and you see him as holy, holy, holy? I want to tell you what he didn't do. He didn't run a hot lap around the church.

He didn't jump up to you. He didn't even raise his hands. He hit the floor.

And he cried out, Oy vey ish me! Woe is me! I am coming apart!"

I'm a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the king.

Isaiah in the presence of the Holy God recognized he had a sin problem, and not just he had a sin problem, the world around him had a sin problem. And while he's seeing his sin problem, here's what Isaiah says. God took a hot coal off the altar in heaven and brought it down and placed it on Isaiah's lips because he's just convinced, I'm a man of unclean lips.

Now, have any of you ever had a fever blister? If you have, you realize that the lip is one of the most sensitive parts of the body. Everybody agree?

I went to Brazil and on a cloudy day with it raining all day long, I didn't put my lip screen on and I burnt my lip and I had fever blisters the whole time I was there. It was horrible. So don't you listen to me.”

I want you to feel this. God takes a hot coal off of the altar and one of the seraphim fly down and puts that hot coal on Isaiah's lips.

Except ten times louder than that. Can you imagine a hot coal off the altar of heaven on your mouth? He didn't say, thank you, Lord.

He didn't raise both hands. He screamed in agony. And then the seraphim said, This has touched your lips, behold your iniquity and your sin.

It's purged, it's removed. Glory, the man who had a mouth problem now doesn't have a mouth problem. Is he still going to struggle with his mouth from time to time?

Yes. Is it going to dominate him? No.

He's now in the light. But you know what? He recognizes there's other people who are just like him that God hadn't touched yet.

So now he doesn't see the Lord. He hears the Lord and the Lord says, Whom shall we send? Who will go for us?

And here he is.

Woohoo! Woohoo!

Down here, Lord! Send me!

Send me! So guess what he does? The Lord says, okay, go. And he heads out the temple, and God says, whoa, whoa, whoa.

I need to tell you something, Isaiah. You're going to go tell them, but they're not going to listen. Because I'm going to harden their hearts.

I'm going to harden their mind lest they believe and be healed.

The guy who was running out the door now is saying, how long I got to do this? That's what some of you are saying. Because your family, your friends, your neighbors, your work associates, they just don't seem to want to believe.

And you're so discouraged. No. Not everybody is going to believe.

But everybody must see the light before they can believe. And that's our responsibility. I want you to watch this.

I love this. John says, Isaiah spoke of this when he saw his glory. He spoke of him.

Y'all ready for this? In Isaiah 6, when you're reading Isaiah 6, it is not God the Father sitting on the throne. In Isaiah 6, it's God the Son, Jesus sitting on the throne.

And he's holy, holy, holy. And the train of his robe fills the temple. And the seraphim are singing, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And he who is holy, holy, holy became a man like you and me to go to that cross and bear the wrath of God and to pay our penalty.

And then John tells us, there's some people in authority who believe, but they were afraid they'd get kicked out of the synagogue if they believed in Jesus. So, they love the glory of man more than the glory of God. And there's some of us here like that.

We think we believe in our head, but we really never believed in our heart because we love the glory of man more than we love the glory of God. And why don't we just confess it and be honest? Many of us do this for us because it's really good for us.

It's good for us personally. It's good for our business. It's good.

Not a believer.

People who have been raised from the dead don't live for their own honor and glory. They live for the glory of God.

And Jesus says in closing, I have come as the light, that whoever believes in me shall not remain in darkness. He sets us free from deadness. He sets us free from darkness.

Are we still gonna battle it from time to time? Absolutely, is the darkness gonna come at us? Absolutely, but we are not gonna remain in it.

We may have our moments, but it is not gonna be our life.

Why?

Because we are not who we used to be. We are a son of light, and God wants to use us as a sign to others of who he is, so they too can become a son of light and not remain in darkness. What are you doing here, Jesus?

I get it, it's because of me. It's because of me, and it's because of you that he found that donkey and came into that city so that he could go to that cross.

You are not dismissed. You are sent. Have a great, great rest of the day.

*AI Generated Outline