

The Triumphal Entry

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Date: 29 March 2026

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[0 : 00] I'm going to invite Miriam to come down. Miriam's going to read scripture for us. Scripture readings from John chapter 12. The next day, the large crowd that had come to the feast 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. 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 to meet him was that they had heard that he had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him. This is God's holy word.

All right, let's focus on God's word together. We're taking a break from James and looking at the passage Miriam read for us, John chapter 12. As we move towards Easter, this is the beginning of Jesus' Passion Week. It's called the Passion Week because the word passion comes from the Latin *passio*, to suffer. So this is the week of Jesus' suffering, and it starts with what's called the triumphal entry, John 12, also called Palm Sunday quite often. Now, if you think of every great literary king that you know about, Mufasa standing on pride rock looking over his land, or Aragorn, the king who was so humble, he had the opportunity to take the ring and seize power, but he refused.

Or King Arthur, who was just a little boy that did not want to be king and he pulled the sword from the stone and became king. He was chosen. We have all these stories. There's so many more of these great kingly figures. They're humble. They've got a quiet strength. They are typically men who are powerful, but never tyrannical. They're self-sacrificing. There's often always a moment in the story of giving their life away somehow for others. They're righteous. They're tender. They're gentle and just.

[2 : 29] We've never, in all the history of humanity, we've never stopped writing that story of this good king, this ideal king. And so you can go and you can find a story like this in Norse sagas or in Arthurian romances from the Middle Ages or in the Marvel Cinematic Universe as well. T'Challa of Wakanda is like this. Where did we get this idea from of the righteous king, the good king, the just king, the tender king, the meek king? And when you look at the records of the record of kings throughout history, it's almost consistently the case that they're all pretty abysmal. And we've never really had a king like this. We've never seen a king like this in our history. And it's because the reason we keep writing this story is because this is the Christian ideal. Every culture points to a king that is otherworldly ideal, one who would have to come down and give us all these virtues that we think about in these great stories we write. The world keeps writing the story not because it's untrue, but because it's true. And this is exactly the story that we're reading about today in the triumphal entry passage.

We sang, you might have noticed, our psalms and our hymns today are all kingship hymns, because the triumphal entry is a story of the unveiling of Christ the king. It's this moment where all of a sudden the curtains pulled back on the reality of his kingship for the first time in the gospels. In Mark's account, there's a consistent refrain in the gospel of Mark where Jesus will heal the paralyzed man or he'll heal the blind man. And then he'll say, don't tell anybody. It's not my time. But then when it comes to the triumphal entry, he says to them, go and find the cult. It's tied up. And when you get there, tell the people the Lord needs it. It's the first time Jesus is self-referential like that, where he says the Lord needs it. The king needs it. This is the moment of his unveiling. It's the moment of the entry of the true king into the city of Jerusalem. And we see here, he's not just a God

who is king of heaven and earth with all authority. This is the king who comes so close, who's so tender and gentle, who gets so near to us that he would ride on a baby donkey. Now, this comes, this shows up in all four of the gospels, this story. It's very important. And you can look at each of the gospels and see something different. The details highlight something different about the importance of the triumphal entry. So in John's gospel, I think John is pointing us to see irony as the most significant feature in the way he writes about the triumphal entry. So let me point you to three ironies in this account of the triumphal entry from the writer John. The irony of the coming of the king, the irony of Jesus' entry first. And then secondly, the irony of the cry of the people. They shout, Hosanna. And then lastly, the irony of the Pharisees' complaint in the very end of the passage, verse 19. So let's look at first the irony of the king entering, the coming of the king here, Jesus. Now in verse 16 in our passage, John writes that the disciples did not understand the triumphal entry until later on. So John says in verse 16, it wasn't until Jesus was glorified that they understood what his entry into Jerusalem actually meant. Now that tells us that we can't understand the triumphal entry without looking at all of what he did, without looking at his glorification, is what John says. So what is that? What does he mean by that? That you can't understand his entrance as king without understanding his glorification. That's what he says in verse 16. So to get that, think about the context for a minute. In this passage, this chapter, if you back up, if you have a Bible, you can see in verses 1 to 8, Jesus had come to Bethany to have a meal with Mary and Martha and Lazarus. And this is the man that he had raised from the dead in just the previous chapter. And so he's at the meal, and then the next day he exits Bethany and goes down the Mount of Olives into the city of Jerusalem. Now Bethany, where he had had the meal, is only about a mile or two from Jerusalem's gate. And it's just on the other side of the Mount of Olives. And the reason he's there is because this is going to be his home base for the Passion Week. And that's because Josephus, one of the historians of this era, 30 years later, he will tell us the only record we know of the population at Passover week. This is Passover week. Josephus says that there would be two to two and a half million people in Jerusalem at some point altogether during Passion Week, during Passover week.

So Jerusalem, the ancient city, the first century Jerusalem is about 125 acres of land. And so you've got to get two million people inside. So it's basically identical to the size of Old Town. And it's basically the same situation as August for us here, Festival Week, about two million people coming through Old Town. So it's exactly like that in one week. And so what's happening here is that you don't stay in Jerusalem. You camp outside of Jerusalem. He's in Bethany. But he comes down on Sunday morning at some point, and he's coming down, and crowds are gathering down the Mount of Olives. But then also clearly crowds are coming out of the city gates towards him, and they're forming this great multitude.

[7 : 54] We don't know how many people, but it was probably thousands upon thousands. And why? It's because the text tells us they had heard he had raised Lazarus from the dead. So they've heard of this great mighty sign that he's done of raising a man from the dead, and they want to come see. And so there's a parade, and they lay down their cloaks, we learn in Mark and Matthew, and they lay down palm branches, we read about in all four Gospels. And they say, behold the King of Israel. So they announce him King. Now this is not the first time this has happened, nor would it be the last time.

So John, the writer here, wrote the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. And in the book of Revelation in chapter 7, John has a vision of the eternal King on his eternal throne. And in Revelation 7, it says that the nation surrounded the throne, and they held up palm branches to the king. The same thing. And then if you go back to the Old Testament, 2 Kings 9, for example, Jehu was crowned king of Israel. And when Jehu came into the city, they laid down their cloaks for him. So this is not the first time that this has happened. This is not the last time this has happened, because laying down cloaks, laying down palm branches, is what an ancient person would do for their arrival of a king. This was normal. This was not out of the ordinary. And so they're clearly recognizing him to be king as they lay down these palms. This is, for us, this is red carpet. This is rolling out the red carpet. And that's what they're doing with these palm branches. But if you went to primary school in Jerusalem in the first century, history class 101 would have told you about another king that had received the same exact treatment. And that was a man called Simon Maccabees. And we talked about him in our Daniel series. Simon Maccabees is the leader of the Jews that came and defeated the evil king Antiochus Epiphanes in the 160s BC. And when he did

that, he took Jerusalem back from Syria, from one of the broken kingdoms of Alexander the Great. And Simon was the figure in the Jewish mind of greatness. And every little boy and little girl in the first century would have gone to primary school and learned about Simon Maccabees the same you would about Scottish history today in your primary school. And so they would have been thinking about him. And what happened is when

Simon Maccabees came to the city of Jerusalem in 163, they laid down palm branches for him. He came down the Mount of Olives. They laid down palm branches. They laid down their cloaks for him. And they cried words like deliverer, salvation. This has happened before. But the key is that Simon Maccabees, as every person in that city would have known, he came on this massive mighty steed. And he came with a big army and troops that came before him and behind him. He came in power. Jesus comes like Simon, but he is truly greater, the true king, yet visibly lesser. And we know that because here he sends people into the city before he comes and says, go, you'll find a donkey's colt that's never been ridden upon. And say the Lord requires that Jesus came in on a baby donkey, not a mighty steed, without an army, without anything like Simon Maccabees had done. And so you see, he's truly greater in himself, but yet visibly far less. And only Christ could hold this kind of excellency together. John's Revelation, the last book of the Bible, in Revelation chapter 5, John has another vision of the eternal king on his eternal throne. And he looks around, and one of the elders says to him, weep no more. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered. So John, in his vision, looks up and he expects to see a throne where there's a lion who has conquered all.

And then it says in Revelation 5, and between the throne and the four living creatures, I looked, and among the elders instead, I saw a lamb who was slain. So on the throne, in Revelation 5, this great vision of the eternal king, the elder says, look for the lion. And John looks up, but he sees a lamb on the throne, and he's on the throne slain. And here Christ, when he enters Jerusalem, holds these two excellencies together that no other king could ever hold. And that's that he is truly greater than Simon, truly greater than all the kings, the lion who conquers. Yes, and yet he appears visibly as a lamb, riding on a donkey's colt. You know, this is not a mighty sea, this is a hobbit's horse.

[12:42] Jesus is a grown man. He probably, you know, his legs probably dragged the ground as he rode a colt, literally a baby donkey, into the city. It would have looked so strange in a way. And you see, who is this? This is the shepherd king, the servant king, the one who we write stories about.

He is the better Aragorn, the better Mufasa, the better Aslan, the better King Arthur. He's the best king. He holds all of these things together, the truly humble king who is the one of absolute authority, of absolute power. And so John quotes here from Zechariah 9.9, and he says, this is the fulfillment that the prophet said he would enter as king on a donkey, on a colt. But John also omits a section of the prophecy. So he squeezes two clauses together, the first and the last clause of Zechariah 9.9. And what he omits is this line, righteous and bearing salvation is he. And in Zechariah 9.9, it said he would be the one who would be righteous, just, and bearing salvation on the one hand, and yet riding on a donkey's colt on the other. And you see the humility of the true king, the final king as he enters. Now, let me wrap this up and move on. This is our long point, by the way.

D.I. Carson points out just a couple of important things to know about this king. He says that the text in Mark and Matthew say that he rode upon a colt never ridden upon before. There's this real sense in the Gospels where this is all according to plan. Jesus knows everything that's going to take place here. He has planned this out. And then Carson says, the colt, it's important to remember, a colt never ridden upon cannot be immediately ridden upon. This is an untamed animal, yet when Jesus goes and sits on it, the colt does exactly what he wants. And here we can remember the rest of the Gospels. Jesus Christ is the king who has authority to still the weather, to tell the storms to stop. He can tell demons to exit humans and go into pigs. He has total command of heaven and earth. When he sits upon an untamed animal, the animal does exactly what he wants it to do. Who is this? This is one who, remember in Genesis 2, Adam? Adam had authority over all of the animals. And they came to him, and he named them, and he tamed them. This is Jesus Christ, the one man, the second Adam, who has authority over all of creation as he enters. He sits upon the colt who's never been tamed, and yet it does everything he commands. But that's not all. If you sort of broaden out and really ask what's going on in this triumphal entry passage, another thing Carson notes is that in the Old Testament, in the Torah, in the law, animals that have never been used for labor are pure.

They're pure according to the Torah.

This was a pure animal, and it's pointing to something else, and that's this. In Exodus chapter 12, Exodus chapter 12, there's the command of what to do during Passover week. And in Passover week, you are to pick a spotless lamb, and you are to prepare it to enter the city of Jerusalem for sacrifice on Passover day. The day that you pick the spotless lamb is called Nisan 10 in the Jewish calendar, the Hebrew calendar, Nisan 10. And Sunday, Palm Sunday, is Nisan 10. It's the day that a family would pick the spotless lamb and anoint that lamb and prepare it to enter the city for its death on Nisan 14, Thursday, the Passover. And remember that Thursday night Jesus stood up at the meal and broke the bread and said, this is my body. I'm to be broken for the sins of the world. What is happening here?

This is the king. Yes, the king, the mighty king who's entering the city, triumphant king, the triumphal entry. And yet, in the moments just before this entry, at that meal in Bethany, Jesus was anointed by Mary and Martha. It's a double entendre. It's a double anointment. Who's anointed in the Old Testament?

[16:56] The king is anointed on the one hand? Ah, the spotless lamb is anointed. You see, in this moment where this king enters the city, this is the king entering as the lamb to be slain. He is coming. This is, as John puts it, what is his glorification? What is his enthronement? What is the announcement of his kingship? It's certainly his resurrection. It's certainly his ascension. But before that, in John's gospel, John says the cross is where Jesus, the king, was lifted up on his throne. You see, this is the king parading to his coronation event. And his coronation is the cross. He has been set apart as the lamb to be slain. And yet, as the lamb to be slain, that is the anointment of his kingship. This is the background of the vision of Revelation 5 and Revelation 7. This is the king who would give himself away as a ransom for many. Let me give you one lesson. One lesson, and that's this.

The way Jesus Christ entered the city, the way he went to the cross, full of glory yet in utter humility is exactly the way you receive salvation. If you want to have the glory he has, if you want to be great and share in his greatness, you actually have to do what he did, and that's follow him in humility to the cross. The same way that he entered is the same way you enter. It's by laying aside all your glory with utter humility and saying, I cannot have glory unless I share in his humility. You receive salvation the same way he earned it, by following him to the cross, taking up your cross and following him. Will you this week, this Easter week, follow the parade to Golgotha, to the cross? Lay down your cross. Follow him. Receive him in the same way he came for you. And that's with utter humility, saying, it's not my achievements. It's not my greatness. It's not my glory. It's all him. Secondly, briefly, then there's an irony here in the cry, Hosanna. Now in verse 13, as they enter, as he enters, and they crowd around him, the people cry out, Hosanna. Now, Hosanna is a Greek word here that's been transcribed directly into English letters, and it's a Greek word transcribed to English that was transcribed originally from Hebrew. So what the authors did here is they took a Hebrew word, they put it into

Greek, and then in our English Bible, we took the exact Greek letters and just put them into English. And so it comes out as Hosanna. You know, everybody knows two Hebrew words, hallelujah, praise the Lord, and Hosanna. And Hosanna means save us, deliver us. And so they cry out. Now the tricky bit here is that very likely John here is not saying anything to show that they think that they're receiving a salvation for the forgiveness of their sins. There's not a single hint in the passage that suggests to us they think that they're looking at the king who's going to save them from their sins, and instead it's very likely that when they cry out Hosanna, they're saying this is the new Simon Maccabees. This is the one who is going to save us from Rome, just like Simon saved us. From Syria. That's their thought. That's clearly why they're crying out. How do we know that? It's because how do you get from Palm Sunday when the people say, deliver us, this is our salvation, to Good Friday? The same crowd on Good Friday will say, crucify him. On Sunday they say, Hosanna, our salvation is here. On Friday morning they're going to say, murder him, crucify him. How does that happen? And it's clearly because they think he has come to displace Rome, not to be a salvation for the forgiveness of their sins. And in Mark's gospel and Matthew's gospel, Jesus, it's pointed out, Jesus enters on Sunday and he goes straight to the temple.

[20:56] And on Monday he came down from Bethany and he went straight to the temple. And on Tuesday he came down from Bethany and he went straight to the temple. On Wednesday, to the temple. And the people start to get the picture that this man did not come to walk up to the garrison

of the Roman, where Pilate reigns. He didn't come there. He keeps coming to the temple.

Why? Because Jesus Christ did not come to displace Rome yet. He came to be the temple. He came to be the sacrifice of sins. He came to replace the temple sacrifices. He came to be the lamb. And as the people start to understand that more and more over the week, they move from shouting, Hosanna, to shouting, crucify him. He's not the one we thought. He's not the new Simon Maccabees.

Let me give you three lessons of why it's so important to recognize this in our own lives as well. You can praise him first. You can praise him and not understand him. You can worship him and cry out to him and not really understand what he came for. They wanted help for their circumstances in the story.

They simply wanted a smaller salvation than he actually came to offer. The people cry out, Hosanna, because they want a smaller salvation than Jesus Christ came to offer.

[22 : 12] Do you have an on-again, off-again relationship with Jesus Christ? Where you come to him when you're looking for small salvations, but you don't abide with him as your king.

The people came to him for a small salvation. They thought he was going to save them from the occupancy of Rome. Do you have an on-again, off-again relationship with Jesus Christ where you treat him like a genie in a bottle? Where you come to him and rub the lamp and say, I need you now.

And that's exactly what the people are crying out. We need you at this moment. But when they realize he didn't come to deliver them from Rome, they want nothing to do with him. They want to crucify him instead. And here we learn in this passage that if the whole of our relationship to Christ is just praying to him in bad circumstances, then we're treating him like a genie in a bottle. He actually came to save us from something bigger than we asked for, bigger than we know we need. And so that leads to the next one. And secondly, what we want, we learn here as human beings, is not actually what we need.

So our desires, our strongest desires that we might have today, your strongest desires you might have today for your life are not your deepest desires. The things that you currently want are not your deepest needs. The people cry out, save us from Rome, but they need something far deeper than that.

And so you cannot trust your own desires for the circumstances you want in your life because your needs, your deepest desires are far bigger than that. He comes to offer a salvation that's bigger than our little wants in this life. And so sometimes we pray and we say, Lord, deliver me, save me, Hosanna, deliver me from this circumstance in my life. And then he answers our prayers and he gives us something we didn't expect. And what he's trying to do in that moment is shake us up and wake us up to say that what we're asking for is not what we need. Our deepest desires, our deepest needs are far bigger than our strongest desires as we express them. That's exactly what the cry of Hosanna here means. And then thirdly, third last application here is that we learn from this crowd who cries, Hosanna on Sunday, crucify him on Friday, is that there is nothing more fickle than the praise of human beings. There's nothing more fickle than when the crowd gathers together and cries out, save us, deliver us. This is our salvation. You can't build your life on what the crowd thinks. You can't build your life on what the social order says about truth, about what you should think, about what you should believe, about how you should act. And Jesus, look at Jesus, how he knew that, that he could not listen to the word of the crowd. Don't seek the praise of the crowd. And this is such a simple lesson, but I think this is probably one of the hardest battles all of us fight in this earthly life, is to get to a place in our hearts where we can get beyond the opinion of the crowd. And we all, you know, we all want the praise of the praiseworthy. We want to hear the cries of people giving us affirmation. But when you see

[25 : 28] Jesus, that he was in this moment headed into Jerusalem to go to the cross for you, for God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son for you, when you see that, you can know that you have the praise of the praiseworthy, the most praiseworthy, and that's all you need. You don't need the opinions of the crowd. People are so fickle. The opinion's going to change. It's going to move on. In the eyes of God, there is no hiding the truth of your reputation. There is no concealing your reputation before the eyes of the Lord. So instead, forget the praise of the crowd and come to him, come to Jesus, follow him to the cross, and let the cross tell you what he says about you. If you have the praise of the praiseworthy, what else do you need? And at the cross of Christ, you have it. He says that he loves you. He says that he came and entered the city in this day

for you, for his love for you. Now finally, let me finish with the irony of the Pharisees' complaint very briefly. At the very end of this passage down in verse 19, you can see that the Pharisees turned to one another to complain, and this is what they said. So the Pharisees said to one another, you see that you're gaining nothing, or we're gaining nothing. We're not winning this. Look, the world has gone after him.

So you can translate that in a few different ways. The world has gone after him, or literally, the world has gone to him. Or it can also be translated, the world has returned to him.

That's the idea. Now, this is classic in John's gospel, and it is the Pharisees' complaint. So they're complaining here, and it's a hyperbole. They look up, and they see all these thousands of people gathered looking at Jesus parading into the city, and they say, what are we supposed to do?

The whole world's coming after him. The whole world's returning to him. And so they're complaining, and they're just wanting to kill him all the more because of this. This is hyperbole born of frustration, but John, just like in the rest of his gospels, uses the words of the Pharisees for great irony. They don't know what they're saying. And so in the previous chapter, Caiaphas, the high priest, said, it's better that one man would die than that the many would die. And he was trying to say there, we got to prevent a war with Rome. It's better that we kill Jesus than start a whole war with Rome. But when he said, it's better that one man die in the place of the many, what was he doing? John is saying he was preaching the gospel without knowing it. It's better that one man substitute for the many than that the many would die, lose all hope. He preached the gospel without knowing it. Then you turn to John chapter 12, and the Pharisees say, the world is going after him. And the reason they're upset is because they see how many Greeks, Gentiles are flocking to him in this moment. The world is going after him. And again, they preach the gospel without knowing it.

[28 : 27] We must kill him because the world is going after him. Now, if you've read John's gospel, you'll know probably that the word world throughout John's gospel is really prominent. It's the word in Greek, *cosmos*, and we just took it right into English, *cosmos*. And John has a lot of different uses for it, but basically three main ones. Number one, the word world in John's gospel means the whole universe. It means everything, everything that exists in creation order, the stars, the bugs, the human beings, all of it. But it also means every single ethnicity. But a third way John uses it sometimes is to mean the broken order of the world as it exists right now under the fall, under human sin. So God loves the *cosmos*. He loves the world. He loves the universe. He loves the stars, and the sun, and the bugs, and the green grass, and the food that he gives us. He loves it, and he loves all ethnicities, and he loves the broken order. Even though we broke this place, even though it's so full of sin and corruption, he still loves it. So listen, John 3 16, for God so loved the *cosmos* that he gave his only begotten son. And now here the Pharisees look up and say the *cosmos* is coming to him. The *cosmos* is returning to him. They preach the gospel when they don't know it. It's such irony. They say the whole world is returning to him. See, we in the beginning, the *cosmos*, we ran away from him. We rebelled against him. We rejected him.

And yet when he, the king, enters the city, the world without knowing it is pulled back to him. We can't help it. We can't help but come to him. All the nations this week, Easter week, billions of people, billions will come and worship him. We cannot help all the nations but come to him.

This is the, this moment of the triumphal entry is the pull of the creator to his creatures, saying, come home, come back, and all the people are coming back to him. J.H. Bavinck, a Dutch missionary from the mid-20th century, he talks about how every person has these same experiences, and one of them is that life is such a riddle. Maybe you come today feeling like life is such a riddle, and what he meant by that was the longer you live, the more you feel like life really is full of pain and sorrow and misery, the veil of tears, and then you think, what are we here for? Why all this mess? Why this darkness? Why this pain? I keep having to bury people that I love.

That's what he meant by the riddle of the universe, that this human life we live. But then he said, in the midst of the riddle, we seek for meaning, and he said, there's these magnetic points that our hearts tend to be drawn back to over and over again. And the ones that he said, a couple of them, he said, we have a sense of our whole relationship with the *cosmos*, that though we're distinct individuals, yet we're connected to everything so closely and intimately. We are humans, and we're not bugs, and we're not stars, but yet we feel like we are here to be rulers of the bugs and the stars. We feel this connection to the *cosmos*. And then the other thing he says is, at the same time, we have a craving for salvation, a craving for salvation. And this is what he wrote about it. There is a craving within for a reality that recognizes that this world, this *cosmos*, is not as it should be. It's

hard to define. We've got a remarkable tendency not to accept reality as it presents itself to us, but to dream of a better world where we will be healthy and safe. Jesus Christ enters the city this Passion Week, and the world did not know what to look for. They thought they needed salvation from Rome, and yet in their deepest desires, they come to him because we crave salvation. They saw him. They saw the king. They had to come to him. And billions of people this week will come to him. And I want to ask you today, do you know, will you listen to your deeper longings, your deepest cravings? Your surface level desires are chasing after all sorts of things, but your deepest cravings are for him. They really are.

And I want to ask you this Easter week, are you moving towards him, or are you moving away from him? Are you going towards him this week? Are you moving away? Well, are you following him all the way to the cross? And standing under the shadow of the cross and saying, that is my glory. He is my glory. The king coronated, that is my glory. This is why, I'll finish with this, this is why, this is why we write the stories of the righteous king, the ideal king that we've never seen. He's real. This is him. He is the ideal king. He is the one we crave. He is the one that we keep writing the stories about. C.S. Lewis famously wrote, the story of Christ is the myth that actually happened. Tolkien could tell of Aragorn, the great king, because he is an archetype of Christ. Because the archetype of Christ has existed for all eternity, it is a person. It is him. That's why we write the story. Our heart is pulled. Are you moving towards him today, or away from him? Every good story that we have ever told in world history finds its deepest reference point in him, the true king, the shepherd king. [33 : 56] The king of love, our shepherd is. Let us pray. Father, we ask today that this week we would follow him to the cross. We would see the lion of the tribe of Judah and the lamb who was slain. We would see the irony of the king who made himself nothing by riding on the donkey's colt. We would see our Lord, you, our Lord Jesus. We would have a vision of a king who came to give his life away for us. And so we thank you today, Lord Jesus. We confess our distance from you this week. We want even, as we sing, the king of love, my shepherd is to return to you. And so we follow you, Lord, even in these moments to the cross, to your enthronement to see the king who was slain for us, the king who did not stay dead. And so we thank you, Lord, for being the shepherd king and for being the ideal king. And we thank you for that in Christ's name. Amen.