

The Gospel of John: The Struggle is Real

Jake Barker | *John 12:12-19; 27-50*

Well what is up Traders Point? I hope you are doing well this weekend. If you are new or just getting to know us we are so grateful that you are with us today. This is our 21st installment in our series on the Gospel of John. So, if you missed any of the previous 20, I encourage you to go to our website or our church app and you can catch them.

My name is Jake. I am one of the pastors here and we are so excited to have you. If you are not all that familiar with the Bible or this word, let me explain it really quickly. That word “gospel” means Good News. So this is the Good News of Jesus. That is what we have been talking about. And you and I know there is a difference between the way you share good news and the way you share bad news.

If you have bad news to share with someone you usually avoid eye contact, you shuffle your feet, you mumble a little bit. Unfortunately, I have actually heard people talk about Jesus that way, as if He was bad news, “You have to believe in Jesus. He will give you eternal life. You have to quit all the fun stuff you do.” That is kind of the pitch.

No, no, no, it is totally different. Jesus is good news. So, because we believe He is good news, we share Him with enthusiasm and excitement. That is why we love doing this every single week. We get to talk about the Good News of Jesus.

So this is the Good News of Jesus according to a guy named John. John was one of Jesus’ first disciples, one of His followers. So John got to see Jesus eat meals, and he saw Him preach, and he saw Him turn water into wine. So John is an eyewitness to the life, and the works, and the words of Jesus. That means he is reliable because he was there and he got to see it all.

Today we are going to watch as John pivots Jesus’ story from His public ministry to some private interactions that lead to the cross. This is the closing scene in Jesus’ life of public ministry. So now we are going to watch as He works His way through Jerusalem to the cross. So that is where we are today—John 12. If you have a Bible or a Bible app I would love for you to join me there—John 12. We are going to begin in verse 12, so you can head on that way.

Now before we dive in let me ask you a question. Have you ever in your life had a moment where your expectation did not align with your experience? You thought it was going to be this, and it turned out to be that. I think we’ve all had that. Our expectation and our experience did not align.

So maybe one day you showed up for your first day of college and you were going to meet your roommate and she was supposed to be your BFF forever. Then you moved in and she had a snake in an aquarium. You say, “What happened?” The only thing worse would be a cat. So this is almost as bad as it gets.

Or maybe you showed up for a blind date and you saw his picture online and he looked like a stud muffin. But then when you got to the restaurant, he was more of a dinner roll. Your expectation did not meet your experience.

This actually reminds me a lot of our honeymoon, my wife's and mine. So we went to Los Angeles for our honeymoon and we thought it was going to be the Pacific Ocean, and sunshine, and celebrities and the whole deal. So we get to LAX and we are standing at the baggage claim and that thing just started spinning. Other people, their bags come and it just keeps on spinning and our bags don't come. Maybe you've had that experience. Once we were done talking to the ball of sunshine who was behind the desk at the baggage claim area, we had to find our way to the local store so we could get some stuff to survive for...we didn't know for how long.

So we drive into Los Angeles. It was the first time we were ever there. We made some Segundo turns and we end up at a Walmart in Los Angeles that is two stories tall. Now when I grew up we had Walmarts, but we didn't have Walmarts like this. So we thought this must be the nicest Walmart in the history of the world. It is in Los Angeles and it is two stories tall. It was going to be amazing.

If you ever have the opportunity to shop at a Walmart in Los Angeles, don't. Okay? Just take it from me. Pass on that opportunity. The lines were forever long. The clerks apparently skipped customer service day in orientation. They just didn't show up. I left with an ill fitting Kobe Bryant tee-shirt and a very emotional, newlywed wife. My expectation did not match my experience.

Believe it or not, that is actually one of the major themes throughout the Gospel of John—misunderstandings, or maybe even more appropriately, misplaced expectations. What happened is God told His people that He was going to send a Savior someday. He said, "Someday you will have a Messiah, a Savior, Who will save you, and your children, and your lives. He is coming." Through these guys in the Old Testament, called prophets, He gave them somewhat of a sneak peek, "Here is who you should look for. Here is what He is going to be like. Here is how He will be born. Here are some of the things He is going to do."

So God's people listened to the prophecy, and they interpreted it, and they had a very particular mental image as to what the Messiah was going to be, what the Savior was going to be. Then Jesus shows up and He starts living a life that was very different than some of their previous expectations. And they were faced with the same decision you and I are faced with today, "Do I accept Jesus as He is or do I reject Him because He is not what I thought He would be?"

So Jesus would do these things. He would go to a party with really, really shady people like tax collectors and prostitutes. And all the religious folks would look at that and think, "Man I would never do that. Is He really the Savior they said was going to come?" Then He would preach these sermons where He said money, and power, and prestige were not the entire point of life. So all the worldly and ambitious people would be back on their heels saying, "Am I in on this? I am not sure I really believe this guy."

So they were faced with the same question you and I are right at this very moment, "Do I accept Jesus for who He is? Do I accept Jesus for what He offers? Or am I going to reject Him because He is not Who I thought He would be and, maybe even more to the point, He doesn't give me what I want." We are going to watch as some people wrestle with that here at the end of John 12 and then we are going to ask the question of ourselves.

So let me set the scene for you before we dive into verse 12. At this very moment Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead. As far as miracles go, that is the crown jewel. That is the ultimate miracle. Giving the blind sight, that is pretty cool. Healing someone from Leprosy, that is okay. Raising someone from the dead, that is the top of the game.

So, as you can imagine, when that happened word got around and people started talking about this Jesus who could raise people from the dead. That makes you very, very famous when you are able to do that. So Jesus, at this moment, was at His peak popularity. Everybody was talking about Jesus. They wanted to see Him. They wanted to hear from Him. They wanted to touch Him. So Jesus was super famous.

But His miracles were not, universally, well received. You see, the religious leaders watched as Jesus grew in fame and influence and they saw their influence slipping through their fingers. They watched as people went and followed Jesus who used to follow them and they didn't take to that very kindly. In fact, they thought He was a threat.

So after He raises Lazarus from the dead, the religious leaders put together a plan of action to kill Jesus. They are going to wipe Him out. They are going to eliminate this rebel leader and kill His best witness Lazarus. They are going to kill Lazarus too. So at this moment Jesus has never been more famous and He has also never been more opposed. And that is the moment that we see in John 12.

Now one of the other gospel writers, a guy by the name of Luke, he puts it like this. Talking about this very moment, Luke 9:51 says, "When the days drew nearer for Him to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem." He is talking about Jesus here right in this moment. He says, "In this moment Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem."

So what Luke is saying here is that Jesus was not just wandering through Jerusalem when He ended up at the wrong place at the wrong time and that He was simply a victim of His circumstance. No. Jesus knows where He is going. He knows what He is about to do. And most importantly, He knows why He is going to do it. That is what we are going to learn here in John 12.

So join me in John 12, verses 12 through 15 as we dive in, "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!'"

Let me explain some of the background so that this will totally makes sense. At this moment, this was one of the moments in the Jewish calendar when the people would gather together in Jerusalem to celebrate a feast. This particular feast was the feast of the Passover. If you are not all that familiar with the Old Testament, you can look it up in Exodus 12 and you'll see the account of the Passover. This was a moment in Israel's history where God, through His grace, saved His people from death.

You see, what they were to do is they were to take a lamb and sacrifice it and take the blood and paint it on their doorposts. During that night the angel of death would pass over God's people and there would be a plague on the Egyptians. Because of God's grace, He saved His people from the doom that faced their enemies. So they gathered together on a regular basis to remember the grace of God through the Passover feast. That is why they were gathering.

Now a couple of days later, as we are going to read later in this series, there would be another Lamb Who would be sacrificed. His name was Jesus and His blood, too, was spilled and He would save His people from death.

But in this moment they were all gathering to celebrate the Old Testament Passover. In that moment there would be over two million Jewish people who would surround Jerusalem for this massive feast. It was a huge, huge deal. Now Jerusalem was about a seventh of the size of Indianapolis. So imagine a city a seventh of the size of our city but imagine doubling the population and jamming them in that city. So all the introverts in the area were just having a panic attack, “I don’t want to be around you sir. Stop touching me.”

So shoulder to shoulder people everywhere. So if you can have ever been in a big crowd, maybe a sporting event or a concert, there is a buzz. There are people talking, and there is excitement, and there is energy because this is the Passover feast. There are a ton of people there and they are already excited. And then they hear that Jesus is coming. Jesus, the One who saves people from the dead, is going to show up to this feast. So word spreads throughout the crowd and they gather to welcome this Jesus to Jerusalem. So they grab a bunch of palm branches and start waving them.

Now what’s up with the palm branches? Palm branches basically served as a symbol of national pride for the Jewish people. So think about us—American flag and fireworks—when we gather together to celebrate us, we blow things up in the sky. That is kind of our thing. So this was theirs—palm branches.

Now here is the story behind it. In the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament, around the year 164 B.C., a foreign people had invaded Jerusalem and had taken over the temple. They were called the Seleucids. So the Seleucids were there and they owned the temple, they used the temple, and they were desecrating it—using it like the Jewish people never would.

So the Jewish people watched this and they grew tired of a foreign people coming into their city and abusing it. They decided it was time to revolt. There was going to be a revolution and they were going to lead it. So a guy by the name of Judas Maccabeus led the revolt. He led an army. Judas’ nickname was the Hammer, which as far as I can tell is the coolest nickname in the history of the world.

Now here is what I’ve been saying. Some of you call Brockett the Rocket. I’m kind of lobbying for the Hammer. If you guys could just start calling me that. No? Fine. So anyway the Hammer raises up this army, and he is going to go kick out the Seleucids, and he does so. He kicks them out of the temple. Then eventually his brother Simon comes along and kicks the entire people group out of Jerusalem. They have reclaimed their city, reclaimed their temple. So to celebrate the victory, they throw what amounts to a tickertape parade and they grab palm branches and they wave them at the Maccabean victors.

So why wave palm branches to Jesus? Two million people in the city of Jerusalem during the Passover feast, they grab palm branches and welcome this Jesus from Galilee. Why? Well it seems as though these people were welcoming Jesus as their military victor. You see at this time they were under the rule of the Romans. The Romans had moved in. It was no longer the Seleucids, but it was the Romans. Again, they were under foreign rule and they were tired of it. They felt like that city was theirs. They felt like they should be in charge.

So they thought that Jesus was not necessarily the Messiah God was talking about, but He was definitely the political, military, and national leader they had so long desired. So the crowd is going crazy. They are

waving their palm branches. They are welcoming Jesus, ready to put a crown on His head, and Jesus does the oddest thing. He goes and grabs a donkey.

Now if you were reading that along with us and you thought, “That is weird that He would go and grab the donkey,” you are right. That is weird. So here is what is going on. Jesus grabs a donkey and He starts riding it in. Now these donkeys were not like the donkeys we would see on American farms. These were actually much smaller. So Jesus would have had to bend His knees to keep His toes from scraping on the ground.

So the crowd is going nuts, waving their palm branches, and Jesus chooses a mini-horse to ride on to go into Jerusalem. Now why? What is up with the donkey? First of all, if you are reading along, you will see that, number one, it fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy. Again one of those guys in the Old Testament said, “Here is what the Messiah is going to be like.” In Zechariah 9:9 it says the Savior is going to come in “riding on a donkey.” So Jesus is saying, “I am the Savior Who was promised.”

Even more so, Jesus chose His mode of transportation to very clearly communicate what type of king He really is. You see, in John 12, John is absolutely painting Jesus as a King but He is a different kind of king. You see they were welcoming Him as a violent zealot who was going to overthrow Rome and immediately fix their current circumstances. Jesus says, “I am a King but I am different than what you think.”

In fact here is the big truth for us today: Jesus is not the King that we want, Jesus is the King that we need.

Jesus is coming into Jerusalem, very purposefully, saying, “I could have ridden on a horse. I could have been in a chariot. But instead I am going to ride a donkey because I am most definitely King but I am not Who you think I am and I am not Who you want Me to be. I am Who you need Me to be.”

Now you and I know that, throughout many periods of our lives, there have been differences between what we wanted and what we needed. If you’ve ever spent time around a kid you know this is true. They may want a cupcake for every single meal, but they need fruits and vegetables. Or guys, we may want everything at Best Buy, but we need a savings account. That is important. Or ladies, you may want to be wooed like the ladies on *The Bachelor*, but you need a guy who is not dating 20 other girls at the same time. That is what you need. That guy doesn’t have a helicopter. I am sorry. I am sorry.

But we know that there is a difference between what we want and what we need. So Jesus is entering Jerusalem and He is very clearly tying Himself to Old Testament prophecy. He saying, “I am a King but I am not the King you want, I am the King you need.” You see the crowd. They were fed up, fed up with the Romans, fed up with not being in charge, fed up with feeling they were foreigners in their own home town.

So what they wanted was for Jesus to come in and immediately fix their circumstances. They wanted an immediate fix to give them what they wanted in their life—right now. And Jesus comes and He says, “I offer something. It is the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. But it may not fix your immediate circumstance.” So the same crowd that was previously yelling, “Hosanna!” which means save now, in a few days they are going to be yelling, “Crucify Him,” because they didn’t get what they wanted.

And maybe you've had the same thing. Like you thought Jesus was providing one thing, and you found out it was different and it left you disappointed. Maybe you thought Jesus was your happiness Savior. And you thought that you were kind of promised that if you followed God and if you followed Jesus then He was going to take care of the problems. Your stress would go away and life was just going to get a lot better. And you came to Jesus and now life is just as hard as it was before. So now you look at Him as some kind of faulty product that you can return to the store. And you go on Amazon and give Him a bad review and say, "I tried that but it didn't work."

Or maybe you thought Jesus was going to be your money Messiah and you were promised health and wealth. And you came to Jesus but you are no richer today than you were before. So you see Him as kind of a faulty, get rich quick scheme. You see, it is not that Jesus didn't come through on His promise it is just that He didn't give us what we wanted.

So, many of us are faced with the same decision that the crowd was faced with on that day, "Am I going to accept Jesus for who He is? Am I going to receive what He actually offers? Or am I going to reject Him because I didn't get what I want?"

And before you make that decision, and maybe you are right there today, and maybe you are like on the brink of, "Man I am just out. I tried it. It is not working. Man, I am out. I am not getting what I want," let me just encourage you to finish John 12 because Jesus is going to explain the big consequences of rejecting Him. And we'll get there at the end of the chapter.

So if you'll look at verse 16 you will find that the people in the crowd were not the only ones who were missing the point. They were not the only ones confused about what Jesus was up to, what He was about to do, and Who He really was. The disciples get in on the act too.

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." So John is writing this many years after Jesus' death and he is looking back on these events and he is saying, "We didn't get it either. We didn't totally understand what Jesus was up to. We didn't understand why He was doing all these things but when He was raised from the dead then it all clicked. It was like a light went on and all of the sudden it all made sense, 'Oh. That is why He said that thing,' or, 'That is why He did this thing over there.'"

In fact Jesus only makes sense in light of an empty tomb. That is the only way He makes sense. If you study Jesus' words and life and dismiss that He is God, He is nothing more than maybe a moral teacher, maybe a charismatic personality, but He is certainly not worth being worshipped or followed. He is not worth all of this. But if we receive what the Word of God says, that He is genuinely the risen Son of God Who came to save us from our sins, then it all makes sense. But we can't understand Jesus' life without first understanding His victory over death. The two are always linked. They go together.

So the disciples really didn't get it, the crowd really didn't get it, in fact Jesus is the only One who really understood what was about to happen and He lays it out for us in verse 27. In verse 27, Jesus explains why He really showed up, "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."

So here John is pivoting the story. He is moving Jesus from public life. Jesus is now setting His eyes on the cross. He knows what is coming when no one else does. He understands that, while they may be

waving their silly palm branches, He is headed toward the cross. And He starts explaining it. Can't you just feel the weight of His words? He is saying, "Look, I know where I am headed. I know what is about to happen," and you can feel the frustration. You can feel the disappointment. You can feel the fact that He knows what He is about to do.

Maybe you are not all that familiar with this so let me just quickly explain what the cross really was. You see God is just. God is the Creator of The Law and The Law says very clearly that "the wages of sin is death," that the "consequences of our sin is death." That is what we deserve. And for God to remain just, someone needed to pay the price for sin. Technically speaking, we are the ones who deserve that. Technically speaking we, every single one of us, myself included, deserve death for our sins.

In verse 27 Jesus is saying, "That is why I showed up. This is a rescue mission. I am coming to step into your place so that I can take the punishment that you deserve." And you get the reward that only Jesus could earn. That is the cross.

So Jesus clearly knows the pain He is about to encounter. He knows the humiliation that is going to come. He knows He is about to be abandoned by His Father, all the stuff that you and I deserve. He is going to step in and take our place. So His words there in verse 27 paint the consternation, the frustration, the disappointment He is feeling because He knows what is coming. But in that very same moment He says, "I am not getting out of this. This is why I showed up. All for the glory of God."

So Jesus obeys even in the face of intense pain. Jesus obeys even in the midst of unjust acts upon Him. And Jesus obeys even to the cross. He knows what is coming even when no one else does. So the crowd is listening to Jesus explain it all and they actually start arguing. They are like, "Jesus I don't really think You know what You are talking about. This is what I understand because I read the Old Testament and it said that the Messiah is going to reign forever. And You are saying You are going to die. Those two things don't seem to go together. Are You wrong?"

Jesus says, "No, look. I am not the King you want, I am the King you need. And I am not the Messiah you thought was coming. I am the Messiah you need to be here. I am going to reign forever. It is just going to be different than you think." So Jesus is clearly explaining where He is going, what He is going to do, and why He needs to do it.

Then we are going to watch some people make a very, very devastating decision. In verses 36 through 43 we are going to watch as some people, who are standing right there hearing the words of Jesus, reject Him because of the darkness of their hearts.

Join me in verse 36, "When Jesus had said these things, He departed and hid Himself from them. Though He had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?' Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, 'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.' Isaiah said these things because he saw His glory and spoke of Him. 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," watch this, "for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God."

John begins outlining the fact here that God knew this was going to happen. God, through His prophet Isaiah predicted all of this. He knew Jesus would be rejected by the people. It says here that even though He had done so many signs, they still didn't believe.

I don't know about you. Maybe you've had this experience. Maybe you've known someone in your life and they said, "If I just had proof. Like if it could be just super obvious in front of me then I would believe." Like, "If this next traffic light turns green, then I would believe," that kind of deal. Or, "If she says, 'Yes,' then I will believe." Or, "If I get that promotion then I will believe. I just need it to be super, super obvious."

And it says here that even though they were standing in front of Jesus in the flesh, even though they had seen Lazarus raised from the dead, even though they heard Jesus' sermons, they still didn't believe. As much as you and I would love to believe that if we were in their shoes we would be different, Scripture says differently. It says, "No matter how obvious it is in front of you, it matters where your heart is."

So John cuts to the heart and he says, "Here is why they didn't believe. These religious leaders had not just evaluated all of Jesus' words, compared them to God's Scripture and said, "Hey look, we've found a bunch of inconsistencies. Jesus is not really on top of His game. We reject Jesus because He is not Who God said He was." No that is not the reason they rejected Jesus. It says they did it because they didn't want to be kicked out of the club. They didn't want to be rejected by their friends, their family, and their community and they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Maybe that is exactly where you are today. You know that if Jesus is really going to be King of your life it is going to require you to make some major change. That, in fact, some people you have been hanging around with, that may not work out anymore. Your family may be very insulted by the fact that you say, "Hey, I really appreciate the way I was raised but at this moment I need to make Jesus my own," and you are scared to make that call. To the Jewish leaders that wasn't flippanant. They really would have lost their entire community. That was the cost. So they chose to reject Jesus because they didn't want to change. They didn't want to give it up.

Here is my experience and maybe this is true for you. I have found that most people don't go on a completely objective endeavor for truth, study all the Scriptures, study all the religions and say, "Look, because of a lack of evidence I am not going to believe in Jesus." That may be the very public reason they give for their rejection but privately, what I have found is that most people just don't want to change.

They say, "I can use the evidence, I can use the science, I can use the blog I read for my smoke screen but deep down inside the fact that Jesus is going to re-prioritize my life, I'm not in on that. So I am just going to go ahead and pass. Jesus I know what You are offering and thanks but no thanks. Because, for You to be King I am going to have to redirect my career and I just don't want to do it. And for You to be King I am probably going to have to end a relationship and it is just not worth it for me. So I am going to reject You, Jesus, because I don't want to change."

Again, you may be right there and you may be wrestling with this right now and this may be exactly where you are today. Before you make the call as to whether you are in or you are out, I'd love for you to help me finish John 12 because Jesus is about to explain the very real ramifications of that choice.

John 12, verses 44 through 50 says, “And Jesus cried out,” it doesn’t say, “Jesus whispered,” it doesn’t say, “Jesus mumbled.” It says, “Jesus cried out and said, ‘Whoever believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And whoever sees Me sees Him Who sent Me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father Who sent Me has Himself given Me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told Me.’”

Here Jesus clearly communicates that the only reason He has ever done anything is that He and God are on the same page. They are one-and-the-same. God is directing His action, directing His words. So Jesus is saying, “Hey look this is it. This is what you need to believe.” He said, “This first time that I have come—I did not come to condemn this world. I came to save it. But there will be a day when I come again and the world will be judged, not unfairly. The world will not be judged with a lack of evidence. The world will be judged by God’s words.”

You and the person sitting next to you, myself included, we will be judged on how we respond to the words of Jesus. Before that sounds too dire, just know that if we reject Him here is what we are rejecting. Jesus said, “Look the world is really dark. Sin has corrupted everything and I am bringing light.” So for you and me to reject Jesus—we are rejecting light. We are choosing a life of darkness. I don’t think anyone would say, “A life in the dark is best.” Life in the dark is dangerous. I am not fully known in the dark. I could hide things in the dark. Jesus came to bring light to a very dark world.

Then He says, “I didn’t come to bring condemnation. I came to bring eternal life.” So for us to reject Jesus we are rejecting life: life to its fullest; life from the Creator; life from the Father who loves us. That is what we are rejecting. So Jesus forced a decision for the crowd that day. And He does the same for you and me right now. He asks if we are in or if we are out? Do we believe that He is truly the King we need, truly the King worth following, truly the King worth worshipping? Or are we going to say, “Look, Jesus, You are not giving me what I want so I am out.”

So here is our big application question today: How does the fact that Jesus is King change my Monday? How does the fact that Jesus is King change my friendships, my relationships, my family? In your Life Group this week we want you to ask this question: How does the fact that Jesus is King change how I live?

So here is a big truth and I’d like you guys write this down: If Jesus is not the King that we want but is the King that we need then Jesus came to give us the life we need, not the life we want. Jesus did not come to give us the life that we want. He came to give us the life that we need.

My proposal to you today is that there is a difference between the life that you want and the life that you need, because I know that is true of me. When I daydream about the life that I want, it is pretty much a life of unprecedented success. Like everything is awesome, basically *The Lego Movie*. That is kind of like my dream. When I daydream, I dream about the moment when I just won the lottery and my friends and family are in Tahiti with me and we are doing “the thing”. That is like my dream.

I don't want pushback on any of my ideas. I don't want to hang around with people I don't like. That is not the life I want. What I've had to learn, both the hard way and through the Scripture is that God, as the Creator of life, knows what I need. Most often what I want and what I need are different.

So what happens when Jesus is King? What happens when I am no longer sitting on the throne of my life but Jesus is King? He is sitting on the throne. How does that change my world? So three big things, three big things we learn from Jesus here in John 12 about how He changes our world.

Number one is this: The life that I want—we want to be proud but we need to be humble. The life that I want is one of pride. The life that I need is humble.

If you remember back to that odd scene where Jesus chooses the donkey to ride into Jerusalem; that is not how I would have written the story. If I were writing this story Jesus would have come in on a tank, like cut-off tee-shirt, Sons Out Guns Out, that whole thing. He would have just made this awesome, awesome entry because that is how a King shows up. That is a big entry. I think Jesus is a better King than I am. I think He writes better stories than I do because He chooses donkeys instead of tanks.

Why would Jesus choose humility when He could have chosen pride? That crowd was eating out of His hand. He could easily have taken over but He chose a humble path, He chose the humiliation of the cross. Why? Because Jesus is a better King than I am.

Here is why I need to choose humility on a regular basis. First of all, I love credit. I love getting the credit I think I deserve for all the awesome things I do. You guys do the same. You are awesome. You look awesome. You do awesome things. And then when people don't give you the credit you deserve you kind of make some noise and say, "Hey guys, by the way. This is a really awesome thing I did and I would like some credit for that."

Here is the deal. The danger for me in pursuing pride is there is going to be a day when God does something through me, something I never could have done on my own. God is going to use my talents, my gifts, my family and He is going to make a big difference. Then I am going to look at that and I am going to take the credit. I am going to say, "Hey man, check me out. Look at that thing I did," fully knowing it was all God. When I am pursuing pride I have this tendency for taking credit for things when God really deserves the credit. So, I get the glory. I love the glory of man more than the glory of God. So the life that I want wants to be proud. The life that I need needs to be humble.

The second thing is this: The life I want—we need to be independent. The life I need—we need to be obedient. I want to be independent. I need to be obedient.

So when you think about this, Jesus, knowing He is about to head to the cross—would any of us have blamed Him for bailing on the plan? He knew what He was going to get. There was going to be nails, and it was going to be a crown of thorns, and it was going to be a bunch of people laughing at Him. Would any of us have blamed Him if He had just chosen a different path, called down the angels, whatever it took? I know I wouldn't have. But Jesus, knowing that He was the only perfect man, knowing that it took His sacrifice to save the world, He was obedient to even death on a cross.

The life that I want is independent. I want to be financially independent, I want to be relationally independent, I want to be emotionally independent. I want to be my own boss. I want to call the shots. In fact, if some of us were honest, we want to be our own God. And Jesus is saying, "That is not the life

you need.” The life you need is one of complete dependence, complete obedience. Because obedience leads to the ultimate goal in life which is the glory of God, but it may involve a cross. The life I want is independent. The life I need is obedient.

The final one is this: The life I want is selfish. The life I need is selfless. We want to be selfish. We need to be selfless.

The cross of Christ is the greatest act of love that has ever happened in the history of the world. Jesus is the only person who actually deserved to be selfish. He chose to lay it all down so that you and I could have life.

Again, in a moment of honesty, I would have to admit that I spend a lot of my energy on self-promotion and self-preservation. I want people to know what I have going on and I pretty much want life to work out well for me. So when something changes in my world my first question is usually, “How does this affect me?” When there is an opportunity for sacrifice I usually ask the question, “Do I think I can live without that?” When it comes to moments like this, this very moment, when it comes to worship I usually ask the question, “Do I feel like it?”

God is saying, “That is not the life you need. The life you need is one where you are consistently pouring yourself out, consistently following the model of Jesus because that is the life worth living. It is one that is selfless, it is one that is obedient, and it is one that is defined by humility because that is the life worth living.

What will happen is that once we finally acknowledge that Jesus is the King we need, giving us the life that we need, we will allow Him into our heart and He will start re-prioritizing our loves. We’ll start wanting the life that we need.

Let me pray for you.

God we are so humbled by Your Word. We are so challenged. We want to surrender it all right now. We do not have the best ideas. We do not have the best direction. You are the only One Who can call these shots. So right now we want to empty ourselves. We want to be filled up with Your heart, with Your Spirit. We want You to guide us. We want You to be the King and maybe for the very first time, we want You on the throne so that You can give us the life that we need. All for your glory, God. It is in your name I pray. Amen.