

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Palm Sunday

March 28, 2021

On this Palm Sunday, Jesus rides into our lives to show us a new way to live differently, love differently, serve differently, see differently; a way of focusing on what God is doing in us and through us in the world. Jesus rides into our lives with the message that we've been set free from the power of hate and intimidation, hostility and oppression, and sets us free to choose a new way of life together.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: MATTHEW 21:1-11

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

As the first century opens, the Roman government was extremely powerful and their occupation of the land was incredibly oppressive and brutal. Anyone or anything that got in the way of "Rome" was met with an immediate and intimidating, hostile and terrifying force. The Jewish people lived under the horrific rule of this oppressive power. It hadn't always been like that. Before the Roman occupation, the Jewish people had been free. They lived in peace with one another, they governed themselves, and they even had their own currency. One of their coins featured a palm branch which represented hope and promise, new life.

But on that first Palm Sunday there was a thick tension in the air. There were actually two processions coming into the city of Jerusalem from opposite sides of the city. One procession coming in from the west side of the city, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor entering Jerusalem at the head of a column of several hundred soldiers. Just imagine this stunning display of power and control; a highly potent visual sign of who was in charge. The other procession from the east side of the city, Jesus riding a donkey, coming down from the Mount of Olives. Jesus is cheered on by his followers - simple, humble, kind, ordinary people. Jesus's message had been about the kingdom of God breaking through everywhere.

On that first Palm Sunday the message was clear. Pilate's procession proclaimed the power of fear, force, and oppression. Jesus's procession proclaimed the power of the kingdom of God, hope, promise, freedom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Were you aware of the two processions on Palm Sunday? How does that change your view of the day?
- Imagine being present on that day. How do you think the people present in Jerusalem felt?
- How do the events of Palm Sunday set the stage for Holy Week?
- Why is this an important piece of the story?

APPLICATION: This week, ask God to prepare your heart this Holy Week. What might God be revealing to you this week? Consider how the events of Palm Sunday prepare us for what is to come the rest of the week.