

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



The Power of God

April 5, 2020

Perhaps the most disconcerting message that Jesus preached to his followers was that it would be won via weakness, service, and humility. This is what Jesus invites us to do and he demonstrates it over and over again: washing feet and riding into town on a donkey to name just a couple. What counts as a winning strategy in the kingdom of God may seem like nonsense to our modern strategic sensibilities.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: JOHN 12:12-19

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

This is a story about power and about misunderstanding. The crowds welcomed Jesus as a king who had the power to drive the Romans out of Israel to set the people free. And Jesus had that power. But Jesus didn't want to change the political landscape of the Middle East. He wanted to change people's heart. And heart-change requires a very different kind of power.

The crowds on that first Palm Sunday wanted a hammer. They wanted a nuclear bomb to destroy the occupying Roman army. But Jesus didn't give them what they wanted. And so, in their eyes Jesus was a loser. A failure. A fool. But the wisdom of God is almost always foolishness to the crowds.

God came into this world in the vulnerability of human flesh. God came into this world, not wrapped in royal robes but wearing a peasant's cloak. God came into this world, not with flashes of lightning and rolls of thunder, but with compassion and love. God didn't come into this world to be served, but to serve. God did not come into this world with the power to force us to change. Instead, God came with a love so deep, so profound, that we couldn't help but be changed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think it was like for the people to see Jesus riding on a donkey?
- Jesus' version of "power" was different than anyone expected. How do you think people coped with that?
- Can you think of other examples when "the power" is not as expected? Other times when humility wins?
- How does this story set the tone for Holy Week? How can we apply that to our week?

APPLICATION: This week, the question you have to ask yourself as a follower of Jesus is this, "What kind of power am I using? Am I willing to fail like Jesus?" Let's fail big together, showing this world love like Jesus.