

Radical#13

Radical Revolution

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A revolution is a turning around, usually associated with convergence of random events and violence, a political upheaval.

Let's take a brief detour with a story:

Two weeks ago Sue and I went to Boise, ID to a conference called *Exiles in Babylon* and it



was like drinking from a fire hydrant. They talked about women in leadership, the future of the church, a theology of disabilities, a multi-ethnic view of the American church and the problem of evil as the

church faces it dealing in particular with the command from Moses to slaughter all the Midianites, all the way down to the babies. It was isolated while we were driving in Utah but we made it and our car was covered in snow. But on the last day, we got sick and still today, Sue has no voice. Therefore, I am going to preach her sermon today. She rehearsed it a number of times in the car on the way there but she couldn't talk with me afterwards because of her voice.

So I am going to use her slides and do my best today.



Here is a photo of Sue doing what she always does: drawing! Here she is drawing action shots of people at the conference.

Let's start with **Rev 7:9-12**

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, **12** saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

This is a picture of the future and final Palm Sunday...today is also Palm Sunday. Jesus enters Jerusalem and people are waving palm branches: this is the **beginning** of the revolution. Revelation 7 is about the **end** of the revolution. This is where we are headed: **the hope**. That is what the revolution is about.

Question: ***What do you want? What do you really, really want?*** (Insert Spice Girls song here). ***How does what you want impact what you see?***

Example: Maybe we have seen a car we want out of a desperate desire and we miss the \$450/month payment. I once heard Charles Barkely say when he first became wealthy, he wanted a Porsch. But he found out later that what he really wanted was to go from A to B, not necessarily go fast...because in a Porsch, you HAVE to go fast. The point is often what we want shapes what we see.

This the last time you will hear me say this: RADICAL! I appreciate the extra time you have given me to prepare for this series. **Luke 9:23** is our anchor verse: denying self, taking up a cross daily, and following Jesus.

The question of "What do you want" is the beginning of discipleship.

John 1:35-39A

35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. **36** When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. **38** Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

Notice how Jesus asks them "**what do you want?**" What they say they want is to know where he is staying. They want to figure things out and learn about him. Instead of giving him specifics about his location, Jesus just says "Come and you will see."

The first step in discipleship is to figure out what you want.

Read **John 12:1-28** (our Scripture from this morning).

In this passage, there is a cast of characters:

Lazarus, Mary (perfume), Judas (money), Disciples (confused), chief Priests (want to kill both Jesus and Lazarus), Greeks (curious), crowds (curious to see Lazarus), Romans. Jesus rides into Jerusalem and waves palm branches.

Some of you grew up at the Village: I know we've cut out palm branches in the past out of construction paper and waved them around. I have this picture in your head. But if you didn't grow up in the church, maybe this is your mind picture:



Imagine Palm Sunday: We know there were 2 million people crowded into Jerusalem on this day. William Barclay is a great commentator who provides some historical background of the entire New Testament. Go to <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dsb.html> to find all his commentaries online or you can find them in used bookstores and buy them and I will reimburse you because I like to collect them. These are handy because he explains texts in the historical contexts. He actually translated his Greek NT and his commentaries come from his brilliant memory; he even doesn't allow his editors to correct his typos because he wants you to experience his writing.

Back to Palm Sunday: Imagine Jesus's experience in Jerusalem: it's very loud and Jesus is pretty short (5'4") and he is riding on a little colt. It's almost humorous. John is a drama nerd: he's trying to say *and* act things out. He says Jesus quotes Zech 9 and 10:'

WHAT IS JESUS SAYING?

KING OF PEACE: Zechariah 9:9-10

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

100 years earlier, the Maccabean king rode in on a **war** horse. Jesus now rides in on a donkey: he is riding in **peace**.

The crowds are saying "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord" (Ps 118...the victorious messiah).

WHAT ARE THE PEOPLE SAYING?

CONQUERING KING

John 12:13

They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Blessed is the king of Israel!"

Psalms 118:25-27

Lord, save us!

Lord, grant us success!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you. The Lord is God, and he has made his light shine on us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.

What is John telling us about Jesus? It's passover and he's riding in as the king of peace.



Behold the Lamb of God... **Ex 12:3-6** tells us what happens to the lamb.

3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb^[a] for his family, one for each household. **4** If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. **5** The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. **6** Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

You take the lamb into your house and have it as a pet for a few days: you connect with it before you kill it and have a sense that your sin is connected to this. Jesus is the lamb who will be slaughtered for us; **he is not coming to undo things**. He's not going to fix the

Romans and Chief Priests. What people want and what people see (A revolution vs. a radical revolution). What do the people see?

Mary: She is the first person on the scene and takes expensive perfume and washes his feet. She wants to be known and seen: she is at his feet and she *gets that Jesus is going to die when no one else does*. She wants to treat him with honor and wants his burial to be good: she wants to take care of him. She is focused on taking care of him, not his death and resurrection.

The Disciples: a mixed bag. Judas wants to have financial help from following Jesus. He wants position and to be seen and to be around important people.

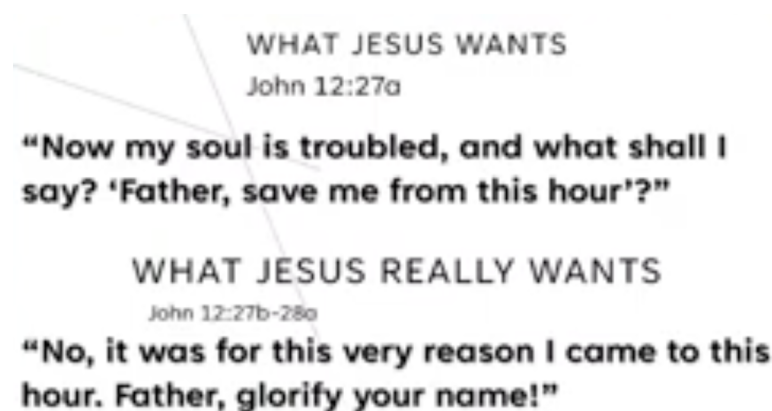
The Crowd: (like Instagrammers: they want to be part of the sensation.) They also want to be part of something bigger than themselves and hoping that Jesus will fix things with the Roman.

The Chief Priests: They see Jesus as a nuisance and they want power; they want to kill both Jesus and Lazarus because this stands in their way of power.

Greeks: They want to see the newest spectacle. They want to be around a celebrity: they are like the people watch entertainment news to find out personal details about celebrities.

Romans: They just don't care: Jesus is not a threat, he is nothing to them. They just want peace in Jerusalem. They just kill Jesus to solve this problem.

Jesus: What does Jesus want? This is key to understanding our answer to this



God: What does God want? To do whatever is needed to be in relationship with us.

Jesus: His top want is not to feel pain: legitimate.

When the Greeks come to Philip, his response is in **John 12:23-26**

23 Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. **24** Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. **25** Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **26** Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be.

Going to the Boise conference, *Exiles in Babylon*, we talked about subjects like women in leadership, the future of the church, theology of disability, multiethnic view church, and the problem of evil...these were all subjects that were not necessarily linked but over and over again we heard a common message that was obviously not planned: if you really want to know what Jesus says about these things or understand about men and women in leadership and how they interact, you must be willing to serve people and walk with Jesus. When you want to explain what is going on when Moses commands Israel to destroy the Midianites, you must be willing to really serve him; only then you will see and hear his voice clearly. It's what Jesus says: If you want to be where I am, you have to serve. You have to lose your life and serve people to find clarity on difficult subjects. This was the one thing I walked away with: This is what we are called into if we want to follow Jesus. This is the invitation: serving and **really let go of our life and really examining what we want.**

"I am either going to worship Jesus, or I'm gonna use Him. And to me, that's the eternal call of discipleship: Am I loving Jesus for who He is or who I want Him to be for my purposes?"

-A.J. Swoboda on Shifting Cultures Podcast

What do you really want from Jesus and how does this shape the way you see him?

Application: We need to look up and continue to look up.

John says: Behold, the Lamb of God!



Did you know that according to a Flemish study, people touch their phones 26,000X/day. Does this seem high? Our heads are always down: This invitation to us to deny ourselves daily is to LOOK UP and behold Jesus and find out where he is staying.

Take the invitation "Come and see" seriously. To get to the part where you look you have to answer what we want from Jesus.

And this leads to a deeper question: Do you Love me? This passage is after Peter denies Jesus three times; this is where Jesus restores him three times. There are three different words for Love in the passage, too.

John 21: 15-19

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Jesus says ***you will find him with his sheep!*** When you look up and ask Where are you? The answer is "***I'm with my people.***" You will find Jesus when you lay your life down and love my people. The invitation for radical revolution is that Jesus walks into Jerusalem and dies and is raised from the dead and does something radical: He answers the question with Follow Me. In **John 14:23**,

23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

"If The revolution is where Jesus is staying **with us**. He makes his home with us through His Spirit and invites us to lay our life down for one another so might taste Jesus as we follow him.

This is my best offering of my wife's sermon today. What is the Holy Spirit stirring in your heart?