

“Fan, Follower or Foe”
Behold the King, Not the King they expected.
Series: Recharge: Plug into the Power of God
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The people’s king comes into the kingdom, the people hear about the king’s arrival. They are excited and full of wonder to see the king. We have all been conditioned to think of every king’s entrance into the kingdom in this way. The king is exalted and celebrated, “long live the king” “the king is here” “who is like our king”. These are a few things that we have heard said in movies. But, Jesus did not come into Jerusalem in that way. He entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey.

The crowd heard He was coming, they were swinging palm branches and crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel”. He came into Jerusalem fulfilling a prophecy about the messiah found in Zechariah 9:9.

John 12:15 says “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

The King had entered the city, as was promised to them about 520-518 BC. What the people wanted and expected is not what the King that came and even His disciples did not understand everything that was happening.

“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.” John 12:16

Like the disciples, many of us miss what’s happening right in front of us, we all get wrapped up in the excitement. The King who could raise the dead has to be the king to deliver them from the oppressor. He did come to deliver them from the oppressor - not the oppression of the Roman Government but from Sin. Sin oppresses us all, this is what the King came to deliver everyone from. The King, who the people observed just the day before, had done something no one has ever done, raising someone from the dead. Many of us get swept up into the excitement.

When I was a kid I remember when I first became a fan. Eagles vs. the Raiders 1980 Superbowl. I became a fan because I watched my family’s excitement over that moment. Fans are made in moments, Followers are forged in adversity. It was through walking with and experiencing moments of adversity that I went from a fan to a follower. Followers are among the fans, and many times can get confused with being a Fan because we all started as one. How do we know the differences between the fan and the Follower?

John 12:17, “So the people, who were with Him (“followers”) when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify *about Him*.”

What we notice about the follower is first, they were with Jesus. “So the people, who were with Him...,” It can be hard to distinguish the difference between a Fan and a Follower. They both follow, but a Follower stays with it, surrenders to the mission, and eventually stick with you no matter the cost. Next, they get the message out -

John 12:18, “The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.”

They know the message and will share it to everyone they come in contact with. Do you know His message and are you sharing it? The Gospel is the message and there is a world around you to share it with. The Foes are those that wanted to see the death of Jesus, His movement and ministry. John 11:53 tells us “So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.” because they had heard and witnessed what Jesus had done raising Lazarus from the dead and as a result John 11 tells us many believed in Him because of what He had done. Jesus’ Foes, the religious leaders, were quite disappointed after seeing Jesus come into the city and seeing how the people who heard that He was arriving clambered to see Him.

“So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.” John 12:19.

The Pharisees saw the fandom and heard the testimony that was spreading of Lazarus being raised from the dead. They did not want their King. Their hatred of Jesus blinded them to the Messiah, their long awaited King because they loved their power and position. But, this was Jesus’ opportune time, many were present. “Look, the world has gone after him.” The Greeks who had also come to the feast, had come to Philip and requested to see Jesus. The word was out and the perfect time had come to accomplish the Great Plan. Jesus’ hour had arrived.

Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” John 12:23.

There were several times Jesus had told His disciples His hour had not come yet. “So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.” John 7:30 and “These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.” John 8:20. This statement is a common theme throughout the Gospel of John. Jesus’ time had finally come and Jesus left His disciples a parable that they would come to understand later, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. **25** Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **26** If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”

Jesus in a few sentences summarizes to His disciples what this moment was all about: the final hour of His life, His mission, and the purpose of His coming. The fulfillment of the Great Plan was here. This is why He came.

Jesus had to die and be buried, “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies,”

Through the death of One (Jesus) many will be saved - “but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

The growth of the kingdom was a direct result of the Great Plan being fulfilled in Christ. The part you and I play is being a Committed Follower. A Committed Follower is:

1. willing to Live for Him and not for themselves. “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” verse 25
2. willing to devote their life to serve Him through obedience, “If anyone serves me, he must follow me...” verse 26.

A committed Follower receives a promise, “and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.” What an incentive from our King to be a faithful Follower. We will be with Him and Honor from our Heavenly Father.

We are left with three lessons from Christ in this passage.

- **Followers won’t always understand the things that God is doing until the appointed time.** *“These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.”* John 12:16
- **Followers share the Gospel.** “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.**” John 12:17
- **Followers are willing to devote their life and serve Him through obedience,** “He who loves his life loses it, and *he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.* 26 *If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me;* and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.” John 12:25-26