



# Mt Lebanon Evangelical Presbyterian Church

*Making and Growing Followers of Jesus*

---

March 26, 2026

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Thank you all for your kind words on Sunday. For those of you who haven't heard, I successfully defended my dissertation last week! It is both a celebration and a huge relief. I seriously could not have done it without you all—both your prayers and your patience were invaluable as I traversed the difficult six-year process. We have learned through this hard season together, and I truly believe God is going to bring good fruit as we abide in Him.

This Sunday is Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week. You have heard the story many times, as Jesus rode on a donkey into Jerusalem, and all of the city came out to greet Him. The triumphal procession is described in all four of the gospels, and they each emphasize different aspects of His humble ride. In Mark 11, the story is stripped down to its basics, with people wondering what is going on. In Matthew 21:16, the Pharisees are angry because the children are praising Him, but Jesus points to the prophecy that God has ordained the praises of children (Psalm 8). In Luke, again they complain that people are praising Him, but Jesus responds that if they did not, the rocks themselves would cry out (Luke 19:40).

This year, we will be looking at John's depiction of the story. I think of John's gospel as the "Wise Old Man's Gospel." He wrote his gospel late in his life, and it shows by the depth of his reflections on all that happened while he walked alongside Jesus. He is not just reporting what happened—he has spent decades meditating on what it meant. In John 12, he tells of Jesus' triumphant ride and then says in 12:16, "At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him."

What does it mean to be glorified? Wasn't Jesus glorified by all the people waving branches and singing His praises? Imagine that it was even more joyful than the parade when the Steelers win the Super Bowl. In human terms, that sounds pretty glorious! But Christ's glory was something completely different. John quotes Jesus in verses 23-24, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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." What was glory to Jesus? It was not adulation and power. It was death first, then resurrection. His glory would come through what would look like failure and defeat to the gathered world. When all hope was lost, that's when His power burst forth into a whole new kind of glory, able to change people's lives for all eternity.

As you prepare your hearts for worship this Sunday, take a little time to imagine Christ's ride down the Mt. of Olives and into Jerusalem. Think about the men, women, and children praising Him and waving palm branches. It must have been something spectacular. Think about the truth of their praises. They were more right than they even imagined, praising the One who would save them. And then reflect on the whole journey Christ was embarking on. Between Palm Sunday and Easter, there is a deep dark valley He must cross, all the way down into the grave. He traveled that road for you. He traveled that road for your neighbor. Not for empty human glory but so that all of us can be welcomed into the family of God, so that we can be saved and set free and be called children of God, for His glory alone.

Blessings,  
Pastor Carolyn