

When God Does Not Come as You Expect

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BIG IDEA

The crowd praised the right King with the wrong expectations. Don't wave the branch, become the tree.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Leviticus 23:40-43; 1 Maccabees 13:51; Psalm 92:12-15; John 12:12-16, 24, 33; 1 Corinthians 15:36-37

1. In John 12:12-16, what do the palm branches and shouts of “Hosanna” reveal about what the crowd expected Jesus to do?
2. Why is it possible to celebrate Jesus sincerely and still misunderstand the kind of salvation He brings?
3. How did the meaning of the palm branch shift from Leviticus 23 to 1 Maccabees 13, and why does that shift matter for understanding Palm Sunday?
4. What are some symbols, practices, or habits in your own faith that may have subtly shifted or could shift from dependence on God toward performance, identity, or control?
5. Psalm 92 describes the righteous as flourishing like a palm tree. What is the difference between waving a branch and becoming a tree?
6. What part of the image of being “planted” in God speaks most deeply to you right now: hiddenness, patience, weakness, endurance, or growth?
7. How does John 12:24 reshape the way you think about loss, surrender, and seasons that feel buried or barren?
8. Where are you most tempted to chase a “quick branch” of spiritual momentum instead of committing to the slow work of being rooted?
9. How does the cross challenge our assumptions about what victory, power, and flourishing should look like?
10. What is one concrete way you can “audit your symbols” or choose to be more rooted this week instead of reaching for another temporary sign of success?