

Talks – Palm Sunday – myfishbites.com

What Is Palm Sunday?

It's a day that many Christians celebrate, looking back to the day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. This was significant because he was declaring that he was the Messiah (this means the 'anointed one' or the one who God had sent). Jesus was saying to the people of Israel, "You know all those verses in the Bible that point to a future King who will save Israel - that's me."

But unlike today, Jesus didn't do this in a 'look at me' way, nor was he trying to market himself. He was and is very different to the whole celebrity culture today.

John 12.12-16 (also Matt 21.1-17, Mark 11.1-11, Luke 19.29-40)

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 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!'

Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written:

'Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;

see, your king is coming,

seated on a donkey's colt.'

At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realise that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

Celebrities

So we all know and have heard of loads of celebs. They can come in the media, the movies, music - or in almost any area of life. I have good friends who love following the exploits of famous climbers or explorers etc. Our TV screens are full of things invented to entertain us and the people that we see become celebrities.

We've got TV shows and TV stations, magazines, websites, blogs and more - all covering celebrity news and gossip. Celebs all have their own websites and we follow them on Twitter and social media - with apps bringing us instant updated info.

Celebs



(Picture created March 2016 - update with the latest relevant celebs!)

So here's a question for you - which celebs do you follow and like and why? If you think you're alternative and don't follow all the people that everyone else seems to, who do you admire and why? A band that's a bit different and edgy? A person who does environmental things?

Jesus - a Celeb?

OK so Jesus didn't live on earth in a day of mass media, the internet and TV! He wasn't being filmed as he went in. There wasn't a 'donkey-cam' to give us the donkey's perspective and there wasn't a drone flying overhead to give us an aerial view. But we do know about who Jesus was (and is today) and the kinds of people he calls us to be.



A ye olde picture of Jesus on a donkey.

Jesus was no celebrity. He has no intention of 'being someone' or doing anything except what he came to the earth to do - to go around doing good, healing the sick and delivering people from evil - to train up a team of disciples to live out his radical life when he was gone from the earth as a man - then to die on the cross to pay for the sin of the world - and then to rise again to show that he had defeated death and sin so that anyone who believes in him could live a rewarding God life and into eternity - making this world a better place and carrying God's love and message of truth.

Philippians 2.6-11 tells us this about Jesus:

who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death –
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

It's all about me...?

How not to do things... (for this without a sense of humour, this is an ironic video...) –
'All About Me' Worship...

Video Link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XHkMPA1334>

God's Calling For Us

The Bible also gives us a clue about the kinds of people God has called us to be:

[Colossians 3.12 - Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.](#)

One thing we do learn from the story of Jesus (and it's one that celebs find out today to their great cost) and that is that people aren't very loyal. The same people who shouted and cheered for Jesus in John 12 were the ones shouting for him to be crucified in John 18. They turned pretty quickly - everyone 'going with the crowd' and following what other people did and said. They wanted a warrior, a celebrity and not a servant King (one of the names for Jesus). This is something that happens today, with people deciding what's in, what's out, what we are allowed to think or say etc. And it changes all the time. But Jesus never changes!

Many celebrities have risen from nowhere but then burned out. Many are lonely, depressed and lost in a world of alcohol, drugs, parties, money, sex and shame. Many celebrities put on a smiling face but underneath is a confused person, a broken person, someone who doesn't know any more than anyone else. And sadly, loads of celebrities end up taking their own lives, many broken and without money. They are like shooting stars that glow brightly for a moment but burn out to nothing.

But we're not to be people like this - we are to be getting slowly brighter every day as we get closer to God, live more for him and make a difference in the world. God isn't against money and has given us things to enjoy. He isn't against you becoming a good singer, a great sports person. He has made you in his image to reflect his likeness. But this can never be the main focus of our life deep in our heart. The love of these things (the love of money) will destroy you.

Jesus said you can't serve two masters - you can't serve money (Jesus means live only for money) and serve God. God calls us to be his followers first and then everything else flows out of that. He doesn't do it because he demands our worship. He tells us these things for our own benefit and for the benefit of the world.

Celebrities put themselves in the spotlight (or other people put them there). It's about them and what they do. But the life of a follower of Jesus always puts Jesus in the spotlight. Not in a cheesy way but in real way that people can relate to!

Like Colossians says and the life of Jesus shows, we clothe ourselves with God's love, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. We should put God first - just as Jesus was doing when he went into Jerusalem on a donkey.