

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

**5-Day Devotional
based on Sunday's message:**

**WHEN PRAISE BECOMES
FAITH**

JOHN 12:12-37



When Praise Becomes Faith
John 12:12-37

Provided by



AKRON GRACE CHURCH
101 N. 7th Street, Akron PA
www.akrongrace.com

Listen to the full message on our YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/@akrongracechurch6363

John 12:12-37 (NLT)

The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted: "Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: "Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt." His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him. Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign. Then the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!" Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus." Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me. "Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name." Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again." When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him. Then Jesus told them, "The voice was for your benefit, not mine. The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this to indicate how he was going to die. The crowd responded, "We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?" Jesus replied, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light." After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them. But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him.

Day 1: The King We Expect

Devotional

Have you ever asked God for help and quietly decided what His answer should look like? The crowd in Jerusalem knew the right words. They waved palm branches, called Jesus the King of Israel, and cried out for salvation. Their praise was sincere, but many were hoping for a ruler who would overthrow Rome and restore their preferred future. Jesus did come as King, but He chose a young donkey instead of a warhorse. He received their praise without allowing their expectations to define Him. His entrance fulfilled Scripture and revealed a kingdom marked by humility, peace, and self-giving love. The crowd wanted Jesus to defeat the enemy they could see. Jesus came to defeat sin and death, the enemies beneath every other bondage. We can make the same mistake. We may stay close to Jesus, know the right words, and still interpret Him through what we want Him to do for us. Faith begins to deepen when we stop asking Jesus to fit our plan and begin trusting His character. He is not less of a King when His way surprises us. He may be showing us a better rescue than the one we imagined.

Going Deeper

The donkey was not a symbol of weakness. It fulfilled Zechariah's promise of a righteous and victorious King who would bring peace to the nations. Jesus carries true authority, yet His victory comes without the machinery of war. His humility is not the absence of power, but is power governed by holy love.

Quote

"A warhorse would have fed the crowd's hope for an armed uprising. But, Jesus enters without the machinery of war. He is the promised King, and His victory will come through self-giving love."

Bible Verse

"The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted: "Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: "Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt." His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him. Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign. Then the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!" " - John 12:12-19 (NLT)

Reflection Question

Where are you tempted to measure Jesus' faithfulness by whether He gives you the outcome you want? What would trusting Jesus on His own terms look like in that situation today?

Today's Practice

Write down one expectation you have been holding tightly. Beneath it, write: "Jesus, I trust Your character more than my preferred outcome," and pray that sentence slowly.

Prayer

Jesus, You are the humble and victorious King. Forgive me for praising You while still insisting on my own plan, and teach me to trust Your wisdom and love today.

Day 2: The Glory Jesus Defines

Devotional

What picture comes to mind when you hear the word glory? We often imagine recognition, influence, achievement, or a moment when everyone finally sees that we were right. When some Greeks came asking to meet Jesus, it seemed like the perfect sign that His reputation was spreading. Yet Jesus did not respond by celebrating His growing popularity. He spoke about His coming hour and a grain of wheat falling into the soil. A seed looks lost when it disappears into the ground. In the hands of God, however, burial becomes the beginning of a harvest. Jesus was speaking first about Himself. His death would not be a tragic interruption of His mission. By giving His life, He would open the way for people from every nation to receive new life. The cross corrects our ideas about glory. Jesus shows us that the most God-honoring life is not built around being noticed, protected, or praised. It is shaped by love that gives itself for the good of others. We cannot repeat Jesus' saving sacrifice, but His grace can form the same posture in us. Because He has given Himself for us, we are free to stop making every moment about ourselves.

Going Deeper

The Greeks' request is part of John's larger picture, the world is being drawn to Jesus. The harvest comes through the death of the grain. Christ's suffering and His glory are not competing truths. At the cross, His holiness, mercy, justice, and love are displayed together, and sinners are welcomed into His family.

Quote

"The world will see humiliation, while Jesus knows His self-giving love is revealing the heart of God. The King saves by giving Himself, and when He is lifted up, people from every nation will be drawn to Him."

Bible Verse

"Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, 'Sir, we want to meet Jesus.' Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. Jesus replied, 'Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.' — John 12:20-24 (NLT)

Refection Question

Where do you most often look for glory, approval, or proof that your life matters? Whose good could you seek this week without needing recognition in return?

Today's Practice

Choose one quiet act of service that will cost you time, convenience, or credit. Do it as a response to Jesus' love for you.

Prayer

Father, thank You for revealing Your heart through the cross of Jesus. Free me from chasing recognition, and form in me a love that gladly gives for the good of others.

Day 3: Following When It Costs

Devotional

When has doing the right thing cost more than you expected? Sometimes obedience brings relief quickly. At other times it requires a difficult conversation, a surrendered preference, patient faithfulness, or the courage to be misunderstood. Jesus never hides that following Him can be costly. After describing the grain of wheat, Jesus turns toward His servants. The saving work belongs to Him alone, yet those who receive His life are called to follow where He leads. His words about losing life do not tell us to despise the good gifts God has given. They expose the danger of treating comfort, control, safety, or approval as if they could save us. We cling tightly when we believe everything depends on us. The gospel loosens our grip. Jesus has already secured our life with God, so we do not have to protect ourselves at every cost. We can tell the truth with gentleness, forgive without keeping score, serve when no one notices, and obey before we can predict the result. Costly faith is not an attempt to earn the Father's love. It is a response to the love already shown to us in Christ.

Going Deeper

Jesus promises that the Father will honor the one who serves Him. That promise reorders our audience. Human approval is temporary and unpredictable, but the Father sees every hidden act of faithfulness. We can release the need to control how others evaluate us because our lives are secure in His care.

Quote

"There will be moments when following Jesus costs more than we expected. In those moments, faith may sound like a trembling prayer: 'Father, bring glory to your name through me.'"

Bible Verse

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me." — John 12:24-26 (NLT)

Reflection Question

What comfort, image, relationship, or measure of control are you most afraid to place in Jesus' hands? What is one concrete act of obedience you already know He is asking you to take?

Today's Practice

Name the area you are gripping most tightly. Open your hands as you pray and tell Jesus specifically what you are entrusting to Him.

Prayer

Jesus, You gave Yourself to bring me life. Free me from clinging to what cannot save me, and give me courage to follow You in the next faithful step.

Day 4: A Troubled Soul That Trusts

Devotional

Have you ever assumed that strong faith should make a hard moment feel easy? When fear, grief, or uncertainty remains, we may wonder whether we are trusting God enough. Jesus gives us a more honest picture. As the cross draws near, He says plainly, “My soul is deeply troubled.” His trouble is not a failure of faith. It reveals the depth of His humanity and the true cost of His obedience. Jesus does not hide His anguish or pretend the hour will be painless. He brings what He feels to the Father. Then He prays, “Father, bring glory to your name.” Trust is not the denial of pain. It is the decision to place our pain, our future, and ourselves in the Father’s hands. Jesus also says that when He is lifted up, He will draw people to Himself. The very event that looks like defeat will overthrow the ruler of this world and become the means of rescue. We may not see how God can work through what troubles us, and we should never call evil good. Still, the cross assures us that God can accomplish His saving purposes in places that appear darkest.

Going Deeper

The voice from heaven confirms that the Father’s glory is already at work and will be revealed again. Jesus’ prayer is therefore rooted in relationship, not resignation. He entrusts Himself to the Father He knows. Our confidence also rests less in understanding every circumstance and more in knowing the One who holds us.

Quote

“His trouble is not evidence of weak faith. It shows us the depth of His humanity and the true cost of His obedience.”

Bible Verse

“Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name.” Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.” When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him. Then Jesus told them, “The voice was for your benefit, not mine. The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” He said this to indicate how he was going to die.” — John 12:27-33 (NLT)

Reflection Question

What trouble have you been tempted to hide from God or minimize in front of others? How could you honestly name that burden and still ask the Father to be glorified through your response?

Today’s Practice

Set aside five quiet minutes. Tell God exactly what troubles you, without editing your feelings, and end with Jesus’ prayer: “Father, bring glory to your name.”

Prayer

Father, meet me in what troubles me and teach me to bring my whole heart to You. Give me the trust of Jesus, and let Your character be seen in the way I walk through this day.

Day 5: Walk In The Light

Devotional

What do you usually do when you cannot see the whole road ahead? We often wait for complete clarity before we act. We want every question answered, every risk removed, and every outcome guaranteed. Jesus gives the crowd a different invitation: walk in the light while it is still with you. The crowd had Scripture, signs, and the words of Jesus, yet many still did not believe. Their problem was not a total lack of information. They resisted the light they had already received. It is possible to admire Jesus, repeat true words about Him, and remain unchanged. Praise stays incomplete when it never becomes trust. Jesus does not ask us to understand everything before following Him. He calls us to respond faithfully to what He has made clear. The next step may be an apology, a confession, a generous decision, a boundary shaped by wisdom, a habit of prayer, or obedience in a place where we have delayed. Light is given for walking, not merely for observing. This is where the week's movement comes together. The King Jesus reveals is humble and true. The glory Jesus defines is seen in self-giving love. The light Jesus gives calls for a response. Faith receives Him as He is, trusts the cross He chose, and follows the light He provides.

Going Deeper

John's Gospel often uses light to describe the life and truth revealed in Jesus. Becoming a child of light is more than collecting Christian ideas. It means belonging to Christ and learning to live under His direction. Every act of obedience becomes a witness that His light is stronger than the darkness.

Quote

"Praise becomes faith when the truth we sing about Jesus begins to shape the life we live. We trust the King He has revealed Himself to be, even when His way is different from what we expected."

Bible Verse

"The crowd responded, 'We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?'" Jesus replied, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light." After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them. But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him." - John 12:34-37

Reflection Question

What truth about Jesus have you praised with your words but resisted in practice? What next step is already clear enough for you to take today?

Today's Practice

Identify one truth from this week that requires a response. Write down the specific action you will take today. Make the apology, offer forgiveness, give generously, begin the habit, or obey in the area where you have delayed. Then take that step before the day ends.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for giving me light for the next step. Let my worship become trust, my trust become obedience, and my life reflect the hope of belonging to You. Amen.