



Today, we are starting a four-week series called *Standing at a Crossroad*. As we begin, you must first understand what a crossroad is. So, what is a crossroad?

The movie *Castaway* with Tom Hanks gives us a great picture of a crossroad.

**[Author Note:** At this point, I showed the last scene in the movie *Castaway* to help students understand what a crossroad is. Tom Hanks is standing at crossroad, trying to decide which direction he will go.]

When you come to a crossroad, you have to decide which way you are going to go. You could go left, right, or straight ahead, or you could turn around and go back where you came from. Whichever way you go, it is a choice you must make.

Over the next few weeks, we will look at the last week of Jesus’s life, including the cross and His resurrection. In the stories we talk about, every person we mention is standing at a crossroad. They have to decide what they are going to do with Jesus. Will they choose to follow Him, or will they go in the other direction?

As we look at these people, I hope you’ll realize that each of you are also at that same crossroad. You must decide if you are going to follow Jesus — even to the cross — or go down your own path.

Today, we are going to look at a story that took place a few days before the crucifixion.

**Matthew 21:1–11 (NIV)**

*As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”*

*<sup>4</sup>This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:*

*<sup>5</sup>“Say to Daughter Zion,  
‘See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”*

*<sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. <sup>7</sup>They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on.*

*<sup>8</sup>A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,*

*“Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”*

*<sup>10</sup>When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”*

*<sup>11</sup>The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”*

This event often referred to as Palm Sunday. You can probably guess why. It involved palm branches and was on a Sunday. We aren't super creative when it comes to naming things, are we? It took place the Sunday before Jesus was crucified. He would be nailed to the cross just five days later, on Friday.

Jesus and His disciples were entering Jerusalem when a group of people gathered. Look what the people began to do.

(1) They waved palm branches and put them on the road for Him to walk in on. Why would they do this? This might seem strange to us today, but at the time, palm branches symbolized triumph and victory.

(2) They also shouted “Hosanna.” Hosanna means “help,” “save, I pray,” “Save, now!” or “praise.” Ultimately, they were yelling praises to Jesus, worshiping Him as He entered the city.

Waving palm branches and yelling “Hosanna” wasn’t a typical greeting when someone entered Jerusalem. This was a greeting for a king who was entering the city. You can see an example of this in 2 Kings 9:13.

### **2 Kings 9:13 (NIV)**

*They quickly took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is king!”*

The people wanted Jesus to be their king. They had been hoping for a Savior who would free them from Roman rule. Most of the people in that crowd assumed that Jesus was coming to declare himself king.

Let’s fast forward a few days. Jesus had been arrested because the religious leaders didn’t like Him. People were turning to Jesus instead of the religious leaders, so the religious leaders came up with a plan to have Him killed. But the people wouldn’t allow that, right? After all, just a few days before, they worshiped Him as their Savior.

### **Matthew 27:11–23 (NIV)**

*Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”*

*“You have said so,” Jesus replied.*

*<sup>12</sup>When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. <sup>13</sup>Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” <sup>14</sup>But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.*

*<sup>15</sup>Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. <sup>16</sup>At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. <sup>17</sup>So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” <sup>18</sup>For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.*

<sup>19</sup>*While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.”*

<sup>20</sup>*But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.*

<sup>21</sup>*“Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor. “Barabbas,” they answered.*

<sup>22</sup>*“What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked. They all answered, “Crucify him!”*

<sup>23</sup>*“Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”*

This crowd was at a crossroad. They had to decide whether they really believed in Jesus or not. Which path would they choose? The people who worshiped Jesus a few days before were now demanding that He be killed. What happened?

Jesus wasn’t who they wanted Him to be. They wanted a Messiah who would free them from the Romans. They wanted a military Savior, not an eternal Savior. They wanted to tell God what He should do and what He should look like, instead of following the real God. They weren’t really following God, but instead they had invented a God who looked like them. So they chose to kill Jesus instead of follow Him.

Before we judge them, these people aren’t much different than we are today. We may worship God at church, but the life we live is often yelling, “Crucify Him.” How?

- When you worship Jesus at church but it doesn’t impact the way you live the rest of the week.
- When you deny Him with your words and actions.
- When you go throughout your day and never think about Him.
- When you don’t do what He commands.
- When you don’t spend time with Him.
- When you don’t follow Him.

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