

Moments

1. Warm up: On Sunday, Jeff told how his dog Mercy once got “raptured” out of his minivan on the way to the park. Ok, well, she didn’t get raptured, but she did suddenly disappear. Just another reminder that you never know what’s gonna happen next. Over the past week, how has life surprised you in ways large or small?
2. The Parable of the Trees tells us how three trees on a hillside in Israel each dreamed of becoming something significant – a treasure chest, a seagoing ship, and the tallest tree in the forest pointing people to God. Then their dreams were broken – or so they thought. But eventually each had the opportunity to accomplish things of greater significance than they ever imagined. Like those trees, each of us senses that we too are creatures of destiny. We long for significance. If God created us, we must be here for a purpose. So we try to figure it all out, we dream dreams and make plans. But then life happens.
 - a. Ira Glass once asked a room of a hundred people to think back to young adulthood when they were first making a plan for their life. He then asked how many were still living that plan. Only one person raised a hand – and she was only 23. When you were a young adult, what was your Plan A for your life? Are you still living that plan?
 - b. Rob Lawless, curator of the “10,000 Person Project,” says the most important learned he’s learned from thousands of conversations with strangers is, “No one really knows what they’re doing with their lives. We’re all improvising.” Do you think he’s right? Why or why not?
 - c. What has been the biggest surprise of your life? At the time, did it feel like a good or bad surprise? How did the surprise affect you?
3. Jeff said, “Most of us tend to think of life as being like an elaborately choreographed dance that we can map out in detail. So we make our plans, but then people, events, and forces beyond our control begin to intervene and break everything apart. At which point we realize, life’s a whole lot less like a choreographed dance, and a whole lot more like improvisational dance. Yes, we get to influence the course of the dance, but so do a lot of other dancers who are also part of the dance troop.”
 - a. Most of us probably think of God’s will for our life as being planned out in detail in advance, like a choreographed dance – and we either follow the script or not. Jeff challenged us to think of God’s will as being something much less set in stone – as being something that takes shape as we go along in dynamic interaction with the ebb and flow of circumstances influenced by God, Satan, you, people in your life, and events in the world. Which perspective feels more on point to you?
 - b. Who are some of the people who are part of the dance of your life who get to make choices that significantly affect the course of your dance?

- c. Do you believe God is part of your dance? Why or why not? And how should that affect how you think about your dance?
 - d. Do you believe Satan is part of your dance? Why or why not? And how should that affect how you think about your dance?
 - e. If life is like an improvisational dance, we need to know what skills or characteristics or ways of thinking we need to develop to be good at the improv dance of life. So what traits makes someone a good improv dancer?
4. Jeff summed up his perspective by saying, “We don’t determine God’s will for our life, try as we might, instead we discover it along the path of life by dynamically interacting with the circumstances that come our way, believing that God is part of the dance, watching for our moments of opportunity, and being ready to seize those moments when they come.” Jeff suggested we see this principle at work in the Palm Sunday scriptures we studied on Sunday. Let’s first read Luke 19:28-36, printed on p. 3.
- a. Long before Jesus’ triumphal entry, God gave people a sign to watch for to recognize the Messiah when he came – Zechariah 9:9, which says, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you. Triumphant is he, humble and riding on a donkey.” To fulfill this prophetic sign, and to make clear he was offering himself as our king, it was necessary for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. But he had no donkey. Apparently though he had some kind of advance interaction with the owner of the donkey, laying the groundwork for all this to happen. Have someone in your group imagine aloud how that advance interaction may have transpired.
 - b. Lending their donkey to Jesus for his triumphal entry is probably *the* most significant thing that person ever did in their entire life. Do you think they ever imagined they’d get to do that? How do you think it made them feel?
5. Now let’s read Luke 22:7-13, as printed on p. 3.
- a. Apparently, Jesus also had some kind of advance interaction with the owner of the home where the Last Supper occurred. Have someone in your group imagine aloud how that advance interaction may have transpired.
 - b. Making the Last Supper possible for Jesus is probably *the* most significant thing that person ever did in their life. Do you think they ever imagined they’d get to do that? How do you think it made them feel?
 - c. What’s one of the most significant and surprising things God has ever used you to do? How did that feel?

Be ready for what’s next (large or small) because God’s not done with you yet!

Luke 19:28-36

28 After Jesus [finished telling them a parable], he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

29 When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰saying, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" just say this: "The Lord needs it."' "

³²So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' ³⁴They said, 'The Lord needs it.' ³⁵Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road.

Luke 22:7-13

7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.' ⁹They asked him, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for it?'

¹⁰'Listen,' he said to them, 'when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters ¹¹and say to the owner of the house, "The teacher asks you, 'Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" ¹²He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.' ¹³So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.