

The Fix

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

On Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, we celebrate major events surrounding the atoning work of Christ. The Jews of Jesus' day had certain expectations surrounding Jesus, hoping he would fix what they felt most needed to be rectified--release from foreign oppression. But this would not turn out to be Jesus' agenda. Today, people still think they know what they most need to be made whole, but it is often different than what Jesus sees and aims to provide. He isn't always the fix we want, but he is definitely the fix we need.

The Fix Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of Sermon & Life Group
1	4/5	Palm Sunday
2	4/12	Easter Sunday

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

The Fix - Palm Sunday

The Big Idea

Jesus isn't the fix we often think we need.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: When something of yours breaks, do you tend to fix it yourself, have someone else fix it, or get rid of it?

Move #1: Let's begin with the story of Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and consider how it speaks to our expectations of a Savior.

Read Matthew 21:1-11 (NIV)

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage [BETH-fuh-jee] on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 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. 3 If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

5 "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.'"

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 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!"

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

11 The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

1. Jesus rode into Jerusalem as a hero, the long-awaited "fix" for an oppressed people. How does the description of Jesus in verse 5 contradict the expectations that they had for him?
2. Name some things in our society or your own life that you most wish someone would fix.

Note to Leader: This question is important for applying this text to our present context, however it could lead to some divisive comments. If this happens, gently steer the conversation back on track.

3. Which of these problems, if any, do you expect Jesus to intervene and fix? Ideally, how would you like him to do that?
4. Why were the people of Jerusalem so happy to see Jesus? What is the difference between being a fan and being a follower?

5. We, like Israel, anticipate our Savior to come and risk missing the real Jesus in favor of the Savior of our own imagining. What are some misconceptions of Jesus that we may have? How can we recognize him for who he is?

Move #2: Next let's continue the story and see Jesus's first recorded act after entering the city.

Read Matthew 21:12-13 (NIV)

12 Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 13 "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'"

6. Why do you think Jesus chose to do something that he knew would shock and infuriate the religious leaders?
7. Instead of organizing a revolt against the Roman occupation, Jesus focuses his attention inward on the brokenness of his own people. In light of this passage, what are the deeper problems that Jesus might want to fix in us and in our society?
8. Why is recognizing our own role in the brokenness of our life so important to receiving Jesus's fix?

Move #3: Let's pick up the story less than one week later.

Read John 19:13-16 (NIV)

13 When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). 14 It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

15 But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"

"Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered.

16 Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

9. It is shocking how quickly the crowds turned from shouting "Hosana" to "Crucify him!" What drove this change? How can we avoid making the same mistake?
10. Many Jews were oppressed by the Roman occupiers and longed for a Savior, yet here they claimed "no king but Caesar." What are some of the "kings" in our own lives that we are tempted to let reign over us instead of seeking the fix Jesus wants to bring?
11. How does following Jesus set us free regardless of our circumstances or unmet expectations?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

1. Trust Jesus as the fix to your life's problems.
2. Participate in our church's online Good Friday service this week!

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

On Matthew 21

2–3 We never hear of Jesus riding an animal elsewhere in the gospels; he and his disciples seem to have walked everywhere, as most people except the wealthy did in first-century Palestine. His decision to ride a donkey for the last mile or two into the city, when he has walked more than a hundred miles from Caesarea Philippi, can hardly have been a matter of physical necessity; his disciples apparently had no such need. It is the more remarkable in view of the probable implication of m. Hag. 1:1 that those arriving for Passover were expected to do so on foot. In that case, to ride the last mile to the city among a wholly pedestrian crowd could only be a deliberate gesture, designed to present his claim as the messianic king (see above).

4-5 ...There is a subtle tension within Zechariah's description of this messianic king: he is victorious and yet meek, and his triumph is received rather than won ("vindicated and saved"). He rides a donkey rather than a war horse, and his kingdom will be one of peace rather than of coercion. When Jesus chose this oracle to enact as he approached the city, he was thus claiming to be the Messiah, but not the sort of Messiah much popular patriotism might have hoped for. Zechariah's vision prepares the reader well for a kingship which will be established without violence and indeed through submitting to the will of his enemies, so that his ultimate triumph will come only when he is "vindicated and saved" from death by the power of God.

8 The crowd's response to Jesus' regal gesture is described in exuberant terms. The crowd itself is now "huge," and its acts of homage are extravagant, as the mention of "their own" cloaks emphasizes. For the use of cloaks as an improvised red carpet for a newly proclaimed king cf. 2 Kgs 9:13; the greenery (it is only John who specifies palm branches) presumably has the same intention of making this a special, royal progress.

12-13 ...The same book of Zechariah on which Jesus' donkey-ride had been based also spoke of the messianic "Branch" who would build the temple of the Lord (Zech 6:12–13, perhaps reflecting the earlier prophecy about David's son in 2 Sam 7:12–14), and we shall see this hope echoed in the popular understanding of Jesus' claims in 26:61; 27:40. At this stage there is no suggestion of *rebuilding* the temple, of course, but rather of its purification, but that too had been promised by OT prophets as part of the eschatological hope. The same book of Zechariah looks forward to the day when "there will no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts," (Zech 14:21) a vision which Jesus now enacts as literally as he had that of the king riding on the donkey. And an onlooker would probably also recall Malachi's vision of "the Lord" coming suddenly to his temple to purify its worship and offerings, so that no one can stand before his anger (Mal 3:1–4). "The Lord" in that passage is God himself, but this would not be the only time when Jesus' coming is seen as fulfilling the OT hopes of an eschatological coming of God: see above on 3:3 and on 11:10 (where the same text from Malachi is quoted). Jesus' action thus points beyond the present priestly régime to the purified temple of the messianic era, and implicitly claims that he himself is the one whom God has promised to bring in that new age. Matthew's readers might remember Jesus' assertion in 12:6 that "Something greater than the temple is here." (R.T. France, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew*)