

**Sermon Series: “The Gospel for Life”**  
**“Jesus the Irresistible”**  
**Pastor Norwood N. “Woody” Hingle III, Ph.D.**  
**Sunday, November 15, 2020**

Have you ever come across something that seemed irresistible? E.g., I remember back in the day the Louisiana Superdome used to have a gondola hanging about 90 feet above the playing field with multiple video screens. Commercials used to be played on the screens, and one in particular I recall— for Ruth’s Chris Steakhouse. At the end of the commercial there would be a sizzling sound of the steaks served there, and I felt very tempted to jump out of my seat and run to othe nearest Ruth’s Chris Steakhouse! The steaks seemed irresistibile! Sometimes people find romance with another person irresistible. E.g., I recall a song from Robert Palmer called “Simply Irresistible” from 1988, where Palmer says,

“She’s a natural law, and she leaves me in awe  
She deserves the applause, I surrender because  
She used to look good to me, but now I find her  
Simply irresistibile, Simply irresistible  
Simply irresistible  
(She’s so fine, there’s no tellin’ where the money went)  
Simply irresistible  
(She’s all mine, there’s no other way to go)”

We know things and people that seem irresistible. And back in the first century AD we will see that many saw Jesus that way— His friends, and His foes.

READ John 12:9-19 (p. 106)

**CONTEXT:** Jesus has healed Lazarus, and as a result He has gotten a lot of attention, so much so that the religious leaders see Him as a threat to their security. The Romans won't like His popularity at all. So the religious leaders start to devise a way to kill Him around Passover time. About a week before Passover Jesus has a celebratory meal with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary as well as His disciples, where Mary lavishes Jesus' feet with very expensive perfume.

READ vv 9-17. "To the crowds, Jesus was somewhat of a rock star and Lazarus was His opening act! Jesus entered Jerusalem in a humble way, mounted on a donkey like the promised king of Zechariah 9:9-10, and He is saluted with "Hosanna!" ("Save, [I] pray") from Psalm 118:25-26 and with palm branches as was used to celebrate Jewish independence in the Maccabean revolt around 160 BC (1 Maccabees 13:51; 2 Maccabees 10:7)." Have you ever seen a great band in concert have a great opening act? E.g., I recall in the 1980's Amy Grant was in concert, and she had an especially big album out called, "Unguarded"; I took the youth group to see her while I was in seminary in Massachusetts and her opening act was some guy I had never heard of, but by the time he got off the stage I was very impressed. His name was Rich Mullins. Some Christian concerts tour together in a concert series called "Winter Jam", and they have had in one concert such bands as Mercy Me, the Newsboys, and Lecrae. Jesus was kind of like that at this time. He was the biggest thing going! He had just raised Lazarus from the dead, and this may have been the climax of His earthly ministry. So the crowds are coming to see Him, but also Lazarus. Jesus comes into Jerusalem for Passover mounted on a donkey. This reminds of Zachariah 9:9-10, where it says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you, triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command

peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth”. Notice Jesus does not come riding in on a charger type of horse used on wars, but a peaceful, humble donkey to rule in peace. One is reminded also of Isaiah 9:6 where the promised Davidic child to come will be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”. As Jesus enters He is greeted by a crowd that is waving palm branches and crying out in a way that would draw attention to Jesus’s royalty. The cry out “Hosanna”, which means something like “Save, I beseech” or “Save, please” or “Save now”. This, together with the palm branches, would have been provocative. We usually think of the festival of Tabernacles with palm branches, but they were also used in celebrating the victory and independence won through the Maccabean uprising in the 160s BC. E.g., this reminds me of ticker-tape parades in New York City when World War II ended, and when Neil Armstrong returned from walking on the moon. To the Jewish leaders, and the Romans if they had noticed it, this situation could only have meant trouble.

READ vv 18-19. “The chief priests and Pharisees are extremely angry, and admit that, at least for them, the situation was clearly hopeless— Jesus was irresistible.” Sometimes movements or people are simply irresistible, and we have seen that in history. People become intensely infatuated with, as we look back on it now, some of the most unusual things. E.g., I recall hearing the Beatles being interviewed as to why they stopped touring for live concerts, and one of the reasons was because the screaming was so loud that they could not hear themselves play! The crowd, especially the girls in the crowd, thought they were irresistible. E.g., I recall when I was in the ninth grade one of the biggest things to get was a pet rock! But there are also times in history where people become extremely interested in worthwhile things. E.g., after World War II, there was a movement in the world toward God, and there was a *Time* magazine cover with C.S. Lewis’ picture on it and the caption said, “His heresy: Christianity” from

September 8, 1947, and his writings were becoming more and more popular. For a time, Jesus was fashionable, seemingly irresistible. Why? Because people, after a devastating world war, were starting to ask questions about the meaning of their existence, and finding in Jesus the answer. Jesus' ministry was like that. He healed the sick and touches lepers, He hung out with the hated tax collectors and prostitutes (calling them to repentance), He forgave sin, He reached out to the hated Samaritans, He hated hypocrisy, and He was no respecter of wealth. He also told them about where to find life. He is the bread of life, the water that will quench their weary and thirsty souls.

“In the world in which you and I inhabit, how is Jesus seen? What is the Lord calling us to do about this?” The world will find out that Jesus is irresistible as we follow this irresistible— through our being like Him in patience, love, forgiveness, and commitment to truth. As we prepare for Thanksgiving and prepare for Advent and prepare to meet family who may not know the Lord, how can we present Jesus as the irresistible person He is?