

Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

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Palm and Passion Sunday

Luke 19:28-40

²⁸After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

²⁹When 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. ³⁷As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" ³⁹Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." ⁴⁰He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

¹O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever!

²Let Israel say,
"His steadfast love endures forever."

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰This is the gate of the LORD;
the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

²²The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

²³This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

²⁵Save us, we beseech you, O LORD!
O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!

²⁶Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.
We bless you from the house of the LORD.

²⁷The LORD is God,
and he has given us light.

Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar.

²⁸You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;

you are my God, I will extol you.
²⁹O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

“Silence & Shouting”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

This was big stuff—it was a parade. It was one of two parades that happened that weekend. The other parade was a major event. The other parade came from the west. This parade came from the east. But this parade was turning into a major event too.

The other parade, the one that came from the west, was the imperial parade. This was the week of the Passover. Pilate was making a show of his power with all those sojourners in town for the Passover. Draped in the gaudy glory of all his imperial power there were horses and chariots. There was also the display of the shining armor of battle. All of it was a demonstration of power—the Roman arm at his side. It made a clear statement to those religious sojourners about where real power was located.

But Luke tells us about this other parade that came at the city from the other way. It is in stark and direct contrast to the parade of imperial power that came from the west. It is the commoner’s parade. It is Jesus in an ordinary robe riding not on a mighty horse, but on donkey. There is no display of armaments. There are branches of trees. There are palm

branches and cloaks waving in the air. There are growing crowds of people.

This thing was growing larger by the minute. A crowd was coming together. They were acting out. They were shouting and calling out. The Pharisees saw all of this and they wanted it to stop. Either they were threatened by Jesus or they knew this could raise the ire of the Roman occupation and threaten the all-too-in-cahoots relationship they had with them. Regardless, they tell Jesus that he had better silence this crowd.

They want a clear stop to all this but Jesus, quoting Habakkuk 2:11, responds. "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out." There was no stopping what was going on. It was fully in motion.

The parade was happening. Jesus in Jerusalem. Coming in from the east. Lights. Camera. Action. Here we go. And the band played on and the chorus sang song: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

It is an echo of the angels at the birth. It is an echo of the great song of Isaiah. It is that Sersum Corda of Isaiah that we sing at the Lord's Table: "Holy, holy, holy Lord, "God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

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Alas, Jesus in Jerusalem. Yes, Jesus in Jerusalem.

This journey had been planned. He had told them that this was his destination. He had even told them that this was his final destination. He had told them over and over again that the journey lead to Jerusalem. The city of God. Zion. The city set high on a hill. That very place where in their world it was understood as the earthly meeting place of the heavens.

**Jerusalem the goal. The journey was all uphill from here on out.
Jerusalem the goal. Where? Why? How? Who?**

“There the Son of Humanity will suffer and die, and he will rise again.” Huh? What?

I don’t know. I don’t know about all that, the parade is happening...it cannot be stopped. “I tell you if these were silent, the very stones would shout out.”

Scriptures fulfilled just as it said. Jesus on the back of the animal. Coats thrown down and spread upon the way. No palm branches and no word of “Hosanna” in Luke’s version of the story, but throw them in. It is not a Triumphant Entry without them... “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” “Hosanna in the highest.”

I love a parade.

Jesus in Jerusalem. The stones would shout.”

...speak Jesus. Speak loud and strong. Tell us how you are going to do it. Tell us how you are going to take over. Tell us how God will hear our inner cry of “hosanna.” Not a victory chant, but a pleading beg: “Save us. Save us.” Hosanna, that is what it means, “Save us.”

Tell us Jesus. Speak it out. Speak it loud and strong. Tell us how God brought us out of the land of bondage, and tell us how God will free us again.

“...be our king Jesus. Be the king we have been waiting for, longing for, begging for!” Power. Go for it!

...speak Jesus. Speak loud and strong. Tell us how you will do it.

Listen. Listen to Jesus. Listen to the on riding that young donkey. He is in the spotlight of this parade that comes from the east. Listen to what he has to say—listen to what he shouts out along the way.

Listen. No speech. Just that statement about the stones that if the disciples did not shout out the very stones would—that there was no silencing this movement of God.

But that was all. No strong talk about how this overthrow of imperialism will take place. Come on Jesus...tell us. Tell us how you will do this.

Nothing. No speech. No words. No nothing. A silent Savior.

The shouts all belong to the disciples and the crowd—they were their words—“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” Their words...they were their words, not his.

He said nothing. Was there nothing to say? Couldn't he say something? Was there nothing to say? Shouldn't there have been some response from the celebrity of the day? This was his parade...say something?

But when he arrives, he weeps. He weeps over Jerusalem.

Remember what Grandmom used to say? Remember how she used to say it: “Actions speak louder than words.” Remember that?

Jesus on parade—he’s silent. The whole parade and he’s silent. And then...

Jesus on trial. Jesus on trial—he’s silent then too. He does not even try to defend himself. He does not try to stop it. He does not even protest. He does not implicate the disciples. He does not run away—he does not even try. Jesus on trial—he’s silent.

Remember how she used to say it: “Actions speak louder than words.” Remember it?

Jesus on the cross. Jesus on the cross—he’s silent.

“He could have called 10,000 angels to destroy the world and set him free.” But he’s silent.

He does not mock those that crucify him—he does not speak ill of them or curse them. He does not blame them for doing what they do.

He does not say agonizing words begging to make it all stop. He does not plead for his life. He did not fight for it—he did not defend it—and now he does not even beg for it. Even the dogs beg. But he’s silent.

He does not speak out with malice in his voice. He does not scream and shout and rant and rave. He does not speak his peace and have the last word. He forgives them. He tells one to attend to his mother. He tells another they will be together. He commits himself to God. He does not speak out with malice in his voice.

He does not admit regret—he does not say he regrets crossing the line with the chief priests and scribes—he does not admit that he went too far healing on the Sabbath and eating with sinners. Speaking to the Samaritan woman and making blind sinners see. He does not say he regrets it. He’s silent.

He does not even curse them. No angry words. No foul mouthed names for the ones that did this to him. No four letter words. No damnation or condemnation for them. He does not do it—he’s silent. Silent.

Remember? Remember how she used to say it, “Actions speak louder than words.” Remember?

Actions speak louder than words. No words, but actions.

He let them condemn him.

He let them beat him.

He let them curse him.

He let them cut him.

He let them lead him to the place called “the Skull.” “There they crucified him.”

He let them nail him. He let them nail him to the cross.

He let them...

He let them kill him...

Actions speak louder than words.

He hung there. Silent.

He hung there bleeding. Silent.

He hung there dying. Silent.

Actions speak louder than words.

**“...who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality
with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
 taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
 And being found in human form,
 He humbled himself
 And became obedient to the point of death--
 --even death on a cross.”**

Listen to Jesus. The silent Savior.

Silent... silent because he's dead.

(pause)

Actions do speak louder than words.

His dying speaks more than words. Amen.