

Luke 19:28-41 Early Morning

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[0 : 00] Good morning, it's wonderful to be here with you today. And we find ourselves this morning at the threshold of Holy Week. Together we're embarking on a journey that invites each of us to contemplate doubting. Cloaks are falling to the ground, branches are waving, and at the center of it all is a man riding on a donkey.

Our text this morning comes from Luke's account. He's careful, he's deliberate. Jesus draws near to the city of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem, it's not just a geographical destination.

It's not just a spot on a map. But for Luke, it's the place where all of history will meet its hinge.

Earlier in his Gospel, Luke has told us that Jesus has set his face like flint toward Jerusalem.

In chapter 18, he tells us that Jesus has predicted everything about to unfold in vivid detail. His approach, his rejection, his suffering, his death.

Jesus has known from early on where this road will lead him. And still here, even on Palm Sunday, he walks. He walks forward. From one angle, it might seem like Jesus is just a victim of history.

[1 : 29] He's caught in the tensions of his time. Surrounded by religious and political forces that are beyond his control. But Luke wants you to look closer than that.

He wants you to see something else entirely. Jesus is not being swept along by history. He's fulfilling it from within. And more than that, more than that, he's revealing the very shape of it.

The shape of salvation. The shape of creation. The shape of your life and mine, if it's to be healed. He's revealing what the life of things has always been about.

Life was never meant to be driven by fear. And then fracture into a zero-sum game where just might is right. Life was never meant to devolve into a great power struggle for survival.

It was never meant to be a great competition that spills over again and again into violence. Time and time again. It was only ever and always about love freely given.

[2 : 35] The character of the creator himself, which Jesus will reveal in his passion. And so Jesus does not suffer history. But if we have eyes to see it, you'll see that he's come back to pull back the curtain on it.

To reveal not just history's true meaning, but the creation as a whole. But before all of the praise and before the crowds, before the chaos and the triumphal entry, there's this quiet moment that could easily be missed in verses 29 and 30.

Jesus, he sends two of his disciples ahead of him to fetch a donkey. One that's never been ridden.

The Lord has need of it, he says. The Lord has need of it. Just as an ancient king might commandeer what he needs from his subjects, so this king, Jesus, he quietly lays claim.

Not with force, not with a sword, nor a threat, but with a word, with an invitation. Luke, he gives us no indication of resistance.

There's no demand for terms. But there's also no guarantee that the cult will be returned. There's just this sense as we read the story, and as we pray in our liturgy each week, all things come from you, O Lord, and of your own have we given you.

[3 : 51] Notice there's no sense of certainty, there's no sense of comprehensive or complete understanding, just a quiet offering back to God what we first received, to the one who alone can make it bear fruit.

Then we come to verse 35. You can read there, they brought it to Jesus, and they threw their cloaks on the colt, and they set Jesus on it.

It's a simple sentence, but it marks the turning point in this story. Until now, everything has just been quiet background preparation. But from here, Jesus takes his place.

He takes his seat. His seat in the form of the long-awaited messianic king. And unlike the other gospel writers, Luke here, he gives us no direct quotation here, and yet still the prophetic echoes of

Zechariah, they ring out in the background.

Behold, your king, he comes to you. He's humble, and he's riding on a donkey on a colt, the foal of a donkey. All the signs are there for those with eyes to see.

[4 : 59] This is a coronation, but not like any that the world has ever known or seen. There are no swords, no war horses, no armies, no great show of force, no chariots, no crowns of gold, just cloaks laid down in trust on a borrowed donkey.

And the humble approach of the one, of the one who through all things were made. And his kingship arrives in a way that no one expects, and no one quite has the eyes to see.

As Jesus approaches, the crowd begins to rejoice, and the air is crackling with hope. The crowds and the disciples, they sing out in verse 38, I wish I could have heard the hymn.

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. It's a cry, it's drawn from Psalm 118, which is a song once sung by the pilgrims when they ascended to the temple in Jerusalem.

But here they reshape it. They reshape it with messianic hopes. They name Jesus king. And their singing and their shouts, they echo not just the psalm, but the song of the angels at Jesus' birth.

[6 : 10] For here and now the crowd is declaring that peace is being made not just here on earth, but with audacity, in heaven, in heaven too. And yet, and yet, and yet, not everyone is pleased.

Not everyone is excited. The Pharisees, they press in, they press in close to Jesus in verse 39, and they say, teacher, rebuke, rebuke your disciples. And maybe they're right.

They fear the unrest, the Roman attention, the uncontrollable hope that's surging throughout this crowd, because hope like this, they know it cannot be managed.

And it threatens the fragile balance that they work so hard to protect. And Jesus, he responds with words, the words that should stop us in our tracks this morning, the climax of this passage.

And he says, I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out. I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out. What do you mean, Jesus?

[7 : 14] What do you mean? The moment is so filled with divine presence. It's so pregnant with the weight of glory, that if human voices fail, creation itself will take over.

The stones beneath their feet are ready to sing, and the psalmist speaks of mountains skipping, trees clapping their hands, the universe as such it is vibrating. Here is the one whose life, whose death, takes the shape, not just of salvation and glory, but it reveals the very shape of creation itself.

Paul, remember, he writes, creation is groaning, it's groaning, it's waiting, it's waiting for the hour of its redemption. And this is that hour, Luke tells us. And yet, the people all closest to the scene, no one, no one can quite see it.

The Pharisees, the crowds, even the disciples, they're all caught in the same narrow vision, unable to see the hidden grace.

They cannot see the hidden light of heaven that is breaking in right in front of them. Perhaps like ours, their vision is clouded by fear, anxiety, the need to control, a desperate clinging to the world as they understand it.

[8 : 28] And so some of them, they press in and they ask Jesus, quiet it all down, quiet it all down, but he won't. And instead, as he draws near to the city, he doesn't bask in the crowd's praise, but if you move your eyes just down to verse 41, we read that he weeps.

And when he drew near and he saw the city, he wept over it. And in verse 42 to 45, you can read about his lament. We hear his lament. And if only you had known Jerusalem, on this day, the things that make for peace.

But now they're hidden from your eyes, which is to say, you can't see the hidden reality of grace because you did not recognize the time of your visitation, or to say, you did not recognize the one who came to visit.

all those there in the scene who should have, they should have seen, they knew the scriptures, they longed for God's redemption, but they don't recognize him. The crowds, they cheer, but they can't see past just the surface of things.

It's right in front of them. The Pharisees, they press in, but their eyes, they're fixated on the threats all around them, the threat of disruption. Even the disciples, in all of their elation, in all of their joy, they can't yet comprehend the kind of king that they're following.

[9 : 49] And so we too are left with the question, can we still recognize God when he doesn't look like what we expect? It's not that they just misunderstand Jesus.

It's that their imaginations have not yet been healed. They cannot see, they can only, they can only see the immediacy of the events that are unfolding right before them.

Their vision, it is earthbound. They're fearful. Their hopes are shaped only by self-preservation. And so they cannot see the one who reveals the things that make for peace.

And what Jesus, he finds in Jerusalem, and perhaps he still finds today in me, maybe in you, is the people who are guarded, people who are a little anxious, distracted, and unable to imagine that God might come like this into our world.

What he finds often is the vision that's too narrow for grace. And so he weeps. Not in anger, not in frustration, but in love.

[11 : 00] And children of the living God, can we still recognize the movements of God in our lives even when he doesn't look like what we expect? This is no abstract question for our world today, is it?

We live in a world that's saturated with fear and scarcity and this compulsion inside of us to secure ourselves at all costs. And we are frenetically scrolling and searching for who it is that might deliver us peace.

Who is going to bring this world peace? And what Jesus reveals as he takes his place on that borrowed cult is a love that will not dominate, but it will descend.

It's a love that will not grasp, but it will give. And it is a love that does not promise any of us an escape from suffering, but instead it enters into it and it transfigures all of our fears, all of our sin, all of our destructive impulses, all of our destructive tendencies, tendencies, and it transfigures all of that into communion.

And his death becomes the very doorway into life. This is not the peace that the world is scrambling to secure. It is the peace that passes understanding and it rides into our lives humbly, quietly, and asking us if we will make room.

[12 : 28] And this is not optimism, friends. This is hope. This is hope that is rooted in the wounds of God and the wounds of Jesus. And so when we say this morning on Palm Sunday with the crowds, blessed, blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace. Peace on earth and peace in heaven and glory in the highest. We're not just talking about a man who came 2,000 years ago. We're witnessing the very place where the deepest fear of humanity, my deepest fear and probably yours, the fear of death as the very end.

The fear of death as rejection. The fear of death as separation. It's undone by the deeper truth that in Christ, even death can become the place where real life begins.

In Christ, even death can become the place where real communion and real peace can begin. And so this morning, sing out.

Sing out with the stones. Sing out with all of creation as our King and our Redeemer. He approaches us again this Holy Week. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

[13 : 38] Amen. Amen. Amen. ■