

**Luke 19:28-40** <sup>28</sup> When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup> And it came to pass, when He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, "Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> "And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing it?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.' " <sup>32</sup> So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. <sup>33</sup> But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?" <sup>34</sup> And they said, "The Lord has need of him." <sup>35</sup> Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. <sup>36</sup> And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. <sup>37</sup> Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying: " 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" <sup>39</sup> And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." <sup>40</sup> But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

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One of the most unique movies I have ever seen was the movie Clue based on the popular board game. What made it so unique was that when it was released, it was released with three different endings. Depending on which theatre you went to, you saw a different conclusion. Not until the video was released did all three endings find their way onto a single tape. Each time you went to the theatre you could possibly see an alternate ending.

Did you ever realize that Jesus today in our Gospel lesson tells us that there could have been an alternate ending to Palm Sunday as well? Oh, most of us know the story of what really happened on Palm Sunday, but did you ever consider the alternate ending? It could have happened like this: Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. His followers threw their cloaks on the ground and waved palms as they journeyed into Jerusalem. But as soon as they got close to the city the Pharisees demanded that they stop their shouting about Jesus being King. And for fear of the Pharisees, they did. The disciples got real quiet. But then all of a sudden the shouts started up again. Each disciple looked at the others to see who was being the rebel and continuing their loud yells. But all of their mouths were closed. And yet louder and louder the yells, "Bless is He who comes in the name of the Lord." The disciples finally looked down and much to their amazement they saw the stones swaying back and forth singing their praises. Yes, it was the stones that picked up where the disciples had left off.

Thankfully, this alternate ending never happened because the disciples did not quiet their cheers for their King. But the amazing thing, is that had they had been quiet, it would have happened. Jesus said that the event of His coming into Jerusalem as King was so important that someone had to sing the praises of it. “Someone has got to cry out,” He said. If the disciples were quiet, the stones would take over.

But why is Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a colt so important that even stones would sing of it? Put simply, it is important because it was the fulfillment of centuries of prophecy. Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the colt was the sure sign that He truly was the King of the Jews, that long awaited Messiah. To be sure, Jesus has entered Jerusalem many times as a fellow Jew coming for Jewish festivals. But now He came as the King of all the Jews to give His life for the world. The hymn we sang earlier says it well, “Ride on Ride on in majesty, in lowly pomp ride on to die.” This is the paradox of Palm Sunday. It is a great day to rejoice. As Jesus tells us, it is a day we must rejoice over. Someone has got to cry out! But at the same time, we are always aware that Palm Sunday is followed by Good Friday. As Christians living on this side of Easter morning, we can’t have any false allusions that the King Jesus will ride into Jerusalem to take the earthly throne free of suffering. We know that He rides on to die. And while that seems like a completely sad note, we know that His death is not just a cause for somberness, but for joy as well. For as our King dies, His kingdom is established.

And so on this Palm Sunday, we rejoice loudly. We give thanks that Jesus did come to save us. We lay down our garments that our King might arrive today in full majesty. For indeed, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” For now there is peace in heaven through Jesus’ passion and resurrection and there is glory in the highest home of God as He watches His Son faithfully accomplish our salvation. Since Jesus came in God’s name into Jerusalem, He is blessed indeed. We know that with His entrance on Palm Sunday Holy Week has begun and that by the end of Holy Week our sin will be atoned for and our place in His kingdom assured. And this is more than enough reason for us to rejoice.

So, are we ready to rejoice? Or has the story become so familiar that it has lost its power? Has even Holy Week lost some of its power to move us? Many people that have seen the movie “The Passion of the Christ” remarked that it was so powerful because it brought to life stories that for too long had become familiar

accounts with little meaning. Today we seek to allow the words of Scripture to come alive for us as well. We wish to get so involved with the story that we see our coats beneath Jesus' path and see our hands holding palms as He rides by our path. We wish to be so wrapped up in their story that we almost can hear the chants in our ears. For, this is a grand day and we are here to rejoice.

Otherwise, for us also, there could be an alternate ending. If we wish not to rejoice, God can use the stones of this church to proclaim his praise. Oh, indeed eventually God will use all people and all creation to declare His glory as our Epistle lesson reminds us. But we seek not an alternate ending here today. It is better for our stones to serve as walls and for us to serve as the God praisers. For we have much to rejoice over. We rejoice that Jesus came to earth. We rejoice that He came to Jerusalem. We rejoice that He comes to us today in His word and in His body and His blood.

Indeed, today right before our Lord comes to us in His Supper we will join in the song of those who stood there on that first Palm Sunday. We will sing as we do every communion Sunday, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, Heaven and Earth are full of your glory. Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest."

It is most appropriate that as we celebrate our Lord first coming into Jerusalem, we also celebrate His coming to us this day in the Lord's Supper. For that same body which rode on the colt into Jerusalem and that same blood which rushed through His veins on that first Palm Sunday will be fed to you this day. As Paul reminds us, as we celebrate His supper we also proclaim His death. We proclaim that the forgiveness He won for us through His death is ours as He feeds us from His table. That is why we can say very literally about the Lord's Supper, "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord." Because in this supper is the King Jesus himself comes to us to reestablish His gracious rule and reign in us. And that is reason to rejoice.

So who will it be? You or the stones? Someone has got to cry out! The King that rides into Jerusalem and that comes to be with us in His Supper today is worthy of great praise. If the stories of Holy Week have become old hat, we must repent. If the Lord's Supper doesn't have quite the meaning it once had for us, we must repent. For today we realize that something very important happened on that first Palm Sunday and something very important happens here today.

Be of good cheer my Christian brothers and sisters. God has forgiven our past lack of excitement about His coming. And today He has set before you the splendor of His coming anew. May we each leave today with joyful hearts singing, "All Glory laud and honor to Thee Redeemer King." The stones may remain silent for we are ready to sing. Amen.