

Even the Stones Will Cry Out

Luke 19:28-40, Mark 11:8-11

March 28, 2021 Palm Sunday

The Journey of Stones Lenten Series #6

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²⁸After Jesus 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."

Luke 19:28-40

Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming reign of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Mark 11:8-10

The Sounds of Palm Sunday

Sounds of the crowds in Jerusalem for Passover

It was a springtime Sunday in about the year 30 A.D. The holy city of Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims who had come for the annual Passover celebration.

It was the sound of people bartering as they bought matzah, grapes, wine, lamb in the market place

It was sound of nervous conversations. A religious holiday in the midst of being in occupied territory. Jewish families gathering and preparing for the Seder, Passover feast but always looking over their shoulders and whispering.

The Roman army presence on the Temple Mount was always beefed up during Passover because of the potential for riots.

Sounds of two processions, two parades into Jerusalem that day on that day from opposite gates

- one that symbolized the Roman empire and military power
- the other Jesus proclaiming his upside down kingdom.

Sounds of the crowds at the Eastern gate

People shouting and singing, breaking off branches ,
waving the branches in order to show the all their joy and expectation,
people taking off their cloaks and spreading them on the ground

The light clomping of colt of a donkey on the dirt and rocks
Jesus riding on its back

Sound of singing from Psalm 118 of one coming in the name of their beloved King David, in the name of the ancient king

Children laughing and shouting, caught up in the excitement to become part of the parade because of Jesus blessing them.

The man with the withered hand who was now cutting down the branches and passing them out to others and talking with confidence

People who had been asked to his identity a secret now shouting Hosanna!

Sound of disciples, followers, women, men, children telling stories of Jesus healing, eating with outsiders, teaching with authority

Sounds of the procession at the Western gate

A steady stream of imperial cavalry and soldiers

Sounds of huge horses moving together pulling a chariot

Foot soldiers walking in step

Clanking of swords

Pontius Pilate riding a huge camel or maybe a large horse

People shouting for their military leader in this military parade

Guards shouting – “Stay back! Not too close!”

Sounds of the Empire

Sound of the Pharisees

Fuming, grumbling,

Asking, demanding Jesus – Tell your disciples to be quiet!

Tell them not to shout out all that you have done!

Tell them to cease their celebrating their love for you!

Sound of Jesus

No, they will not be quiet. They will not be silenced

They are speaking truth, hope, a vision kin-dom of God

They are telling what they have seen, what they have experienced

The Holy One is present.

They will not be silent. Even if they stopped shouting, these very stones
part of creation, would cry out and shout.
You cannot silence the very word of God.

Palm Sunday was loud. Palm Sunday was noisy.

Today sounds of the crowd seems strange
We have been staying away from crowds for over a year
Do not go where there are crowds.
Stay home if you can. Stay safe.

Yet there have been crowds
Marches, peaceful protests across the country and the world
Black Lives Matter – people of all races chanting, marching singing, speaking.
Sounds of crying out against hate, against violence, against injustice
against police brutality, against systemic racism, against white privilege
against violence toward Asian Americans
And we heard sounds of a mob on January 6
People yelling as they ran toward and into the capital building
Sounds that were disturbing, frightening, shocking
Sounds of people who seemed to want to undermine democracy and
shouting that they would take matters into their own hands with violence

There are different kinds of crowds

Sounds this week that mirror the story of Jesus' last days
Weeping - Jesus wept over Jerusalem
We are weeping again. Two more mass shootings using assault rifles
Weeping over Atlanta and Boulder –
18 innocent people killed. 18 families and circles of friends devastated.
Sound of gun fire
The sound of a collectiveNo!! No!!! This must stop!

Jesus says
You cannot silence those who follow me
You cannot silence those who are walking the ways of shalom, of agape love
of justice, of healing and hope, of bigger tables
Even the stones will cry out
Cry out of hope and truth
Creation speaks. Stones have stories to tell

One stone might tell how a little shepherd boy named David used a small stone to slay a Goliath the Philistine. Another stones might tell how Solomon had used stones to build a beautiful temple for people to worship God. Still another rock might remind us that Jesus once told a story about a wise man who built his house upon a rock. When the storms came, the house on the rock stood firm.

Stones have been the building blocks of both war and peace,
thrown in anger,
stacked into walls,
built into sanctuaries and places of shelter for humans and creatures
painted to share joy.

Jesus says that when voices are silent, the stones will still shout.
The whole of creation reverberates with this good news: The kin-dom of God is among you!

Where and when do you hear sounds of Divine Love?
Where are the stones and rocks that speak truth to your heart?

Close with a story about a place where the rocks seem to speak. It is a special memorial structure and it creates a space for...

 Sounds of weeping Sound of silence

 Sound of grief and remembering Sounds of death and loss

In Italy, artists and architects are using rocks and stones to speak to people in their grief and memorialize those who've died from Covid-19. There was an article in the NYT a few weeks ago about a town in the region of Lombardy. Lombardy was one of the Italian regions first affected by the coronavirus. Last August, the nearby town of Casalpusterlengo unveiled a memorial designed by Ottorino Buttarelli, a local artist, featuring stones piled into a small tower, to represent townspeople who have died.

Buttarelli said he had involved the town's residents in the memorial's creation. He asked them to go to the nearby Po river to collect stones for the structure, and many wrote the names of loved ones they had lost on them, sometimes adding personal messages or decorating them with stars and hearts.

"We realized the need and urgency people had to mourn," Buttarelli said. "People in this village were left to die in solitude and silence, often without a funeral. Bringing the stone and writing the name became the funeral. Unfortunately, we are still adding names."

Today we remember the sound of Hosannas as we carry our grief, our burdens and our hope on our journey into Holy Week. Amen.

"Giving Hope, and a Place to Mourn: Memorials to the Pandemic" NYT 2/22/2021 and 3/6/2021 Print
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/22/arts/design/coronavirus-memorials-italy-britain.html>