

"What Would They Say?"

Text: Luke 19:28-42

*"Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die.
O Christ, your triumphs now begin o'er captive death and conquered sin.
Ride on, ride on in majesty! The angel armies of the sky
Look down with sad and wondering eyes to see the approaching sacrifice."
Amen (SoC 314 2-3)*

Dear Fellow Christians:

There are certain phrases that, though lacking specifics, nonetheless instantly form a framework of the preceding conversation. Take, for example, the expression *"It needed to be said."* Suppose you walked up to a group of people having a conversation and the first and only thing you heard was that statement: *"It needed to be said."* You would immediately have a sense of what came before. Someone, at some point in the past, said something unpleasant or disagreeable to someone else. You would also understand that, in the opinion of the speaker, whatever was said was not only appropriate but, in their opinion, necessary – as in: *"Bill finally told Jane that she talks too much"* or *"Marge finally told Tom that he needs to shower more."*

We have another infinitely more important example in our text for this morning. In this case, Jesus himself is the one who said, in essence, *"It needed to be said."* He phrased the statement a little differently, but the meaning was basically the same: ***"I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."*** Suppose you joined the conversation just when Jesus said what he did. What would be your first question? If something "needed to be said" so badly that even the stones would say it if man did not say it, the obvious question would be, *"What would they say?"*

That's the question we will explore on this Palm Sunday: *What was so important? What needed to be said so badly that even the very stones would cry out if man did not?* The text that will guide and instruct us this morning is found in Luke's Gospel, the 19th Chapter:

^{ESV} ***Luke 19:28-42*** ***And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" ³² So those who were sent went away***

and found it just as he had told them. ³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ And they said, "The Lord has need of it." ³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was drawing near--already on the way down the Mount of Olives-- the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." ⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." ⁴¹ ¶ And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."

This is God's Word, given by his grace through the verbally inspired writer, Luke. Fully confident that these are God's words, and eager therefore to be instructed and strengthened by them, so we pray: ***"Sanctify us by the truth, O Lord. Your word is truth!"*** Amen.

Palm Sunday is many things – the start of Holy Week, a foretaste of Christ's Second Coming, a glimpse into the power that our Savior will one day openly demonstrate to the world, and so on. Yet given all of that, the one word that sums up what we see personified in this event is *humility*. Think of what was happening there. Despite the jubilant reception of the crowd, Jesus entered Jerusalem to die in shame on a Roman cross.

You and I have heard that phrase so often ("Jesus died on the cross") that we are in constant danger of ignoring or overlooking not only the divine love but the profound irony - as well as the sublime humility - that that simple little phrase conveys. As true God, Jesus was and is the Creator of all life. He is the eternal God – *"begotten of the Father from eternity."* And he was and is sinless, in every possible way. As such he was in no way subject to that to which our sin subjected us – death. And yet, again, he went to Jerusalem to die. God, to die.

Such sublime truth could only ever be explained in light of a humility and selfless love on the part of our Savior that is beyond human comprehension - perfect and holy in every way.

A casual glance through our text gives us the bare essentials of Palm Sunday. Jesus entered Jerusalem like a king; that is, he entered the capital according to the traditional parade of a king. What the people did for Jesus – spreading their coats and palm branches in his path – was a reception reserved for the welcome of royalty. Jesus' followers got it. The people of Jerusalem got it. Jesus' enemies got it. Virtually no one missed the message that was being conveyed: *"A king is entering Jerusalem."*

So what was the problem? Why did Jesus' enemies get so upset? Why did they command Jesus to silence his disciples? More to the point, why did Jesus refuse? What exactly was it that needed to be said?

Jesus refused to silence his disciples, first, because he recognized that the time had come to stop speaking in riddles and parables. The time had come to proclaim to the world, clearly and without equivocation, exactly who he was and what he had come to do. It was also time, therefore, for Jesus to thereby give his enemies the evidence that they had been so desperately trying to establish – evidence they would use to condemn him to death.

Prior to this event, Jesus had always used terms, phrases, stories that absolutely either baffled or frustrated his enemies. Either they couldn't make heads or tails of the things he said, or they could find no way to use his words to condemn him. He spoke of things like *"the sign of Jonah"* – which we now understand to mean that as Jonah was in the great fish three days, so Jesus would be in the grave for three days. He thereby spoke truth, but in a way that left his enemies totally befuddled. He cleverly spoke of his death and resurrection by saying, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* Again, we get it. They didn't. Or, if they did get it, they couldn't use it to condemn him. A man's claim that he will rise from the dead on the third day does not justify putting him to death.

Starting on Palm Sunday, everything changed. From that point on, Jesus radically altered his method of operation. Jesus always intended to die in Jerusalem, but always according to his plan, his timetable. You will recall his definitive statement on the matter in John 10:17-18: *"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."* The divinely determined time for Jesus to lay down his life had arrived – which was also why Jesus didn't tell the indignant Pharisees that he *wouldn't* silence his followers. He told them he *couldn't*. *"I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."*

Remember, Jesus never used exaggeration or hyperbole. If his enemies had succeeded in silencing Jesus' followers, the very stones would absolutely have cried out. One way or the other, the public proclamation *would be made* – right then, right there. But, again, what proclamation? What exactly was it that absolutely, without fail, needed to be said?

The simple answer is that this Jesus, who was entering Jerusalem as a king, is himself the Promised Messiah. He is the One promised of old – the Fulfillment of all of the ancient prophecies. The King of all kings and the Lord of all lords.

That's the short answer, but there's more to it than just that. *Why* did that need to be proclaimed? And why then? The fact is the scribes and Pharisees had to be incited, and incited they certainly were. The time had come for Jesus to provoke his enemies into acting. A significant part of that provocation, that incitement, was the palpable fear created not only by Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem but by what the crowds were shouting: *"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

To explain the fear of Jesus' enemies, think back to the telling exchange that took place among them after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. *"So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."* That last part is the key. These men loved their earthly power above all else. That's why their greatest fear was that the Romans would come and rob them of their positions and power. That fear was magnified exponentially when they saw the crowds that welcomed Jesus into the capitol city as a king, but even more so by what they heard. Each of the four Gospel writers included different examples of what the people were shouting. From Matthew: *"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"*^{ESV}(Matthew 21:9) From Mark: *"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"*^{ESV}(Mark 11:9-10) From John: *"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"*^{ESV}(John 12:13)

The very thing they feared the most was happening right before their eyes. The people on Palm Sunday were welcoming not just a king, but the promised king from David's royal line. Rome would certainly hear of this if the people could not be silenced – which is exactly what they commanded Jesus to do. Again, he refused not on the basis of “would not” but “could not.”

Do you recall the counsel of the high priest Caiaphas right after the chief priests and Pharisees expressed their fear at losing their power and position? ***But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰ Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."***^{ESV}(John 11:47-50) The events of Palm Sunday absolutely solidified in their minds that the only solution was to kill Jesus.

Jesus was, as always, way ahead of them. This is why he came to earth in the first place. For this time and for this purpose. His Father was the director of this great drama and he the star. All others were just bit players. The crowds had their lines to speak. If they were silenced the very stones would cry out that this, finally, is the long-promised Messiah. He has come to Jerusalem – not, as they had imagined, to reign as an earthly king but to open heaven's door to the life that would follow.

Hear their voices and know that they speak God's own words of truth and comfort. They proclaim, as we heard in our text, ***“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”*** ***“Peace in heaven”*** because the payment Jesus made on the cross has erased the debt of our sins and thereby reconciled us to our Heavenly Father. ***“Glory in the highest”*** because 100% of the credit for our rescue belongs to God alone, and therefore also the *glory* of rescued souls.

This is what the stones would have proclaimed had the crowds been silenced. This is what needed to be said. Hear. And believe. Amen

ESV **Deuteronomy 32:36-39** For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free. ³⁷ Then he will say, "Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, ³⁸ who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection! ³⁹ "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

ESV **Philippians 2:5-11** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

ESV **Luke 19:28-42** And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" ³² So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. ³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ And they said, "The Lord has need of it." ³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was drawing near--already on the way down the Mount of Olives--the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." ⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." ⁴¹ ¶ And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.



PALM SUNDAY

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

Matthew 21:9 ESV

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Palm Sunday – April 13, 2025

The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

The Opening Hymn – 313 (Blue Hymnal)

"Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

The Order of Service – Hymnal page 1ff. (Blue Hymnal)

The Scripture Lessons: (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

The First Lesson: (Deuteronomy 32:36-39) God hates sinful human pride. He cannot tolerate that which fails to give him all glory and praise for all that is good and pure. Anything less is sin, for he alone is worthy. There is also great wisdom in this, for all those who trust in anything other than in God alone will be sorely disappointed. The crowds welcomed Jesus as King on Palm Sunday but then called for his crucifixion on Good Friday. They did not go unpunished. No one that rejects Jesus escapes.

The Psalm of the Day – Psalm 8 (Blue Hymnal Page 59)

The Second Lesson: (Philippians 2:5-11) Listen to our New Testament lesson this morning with ears tuned to Palm Sunday and it immediately takes on new meaning and significance. Notice the two parts in this lesson – Christ humbled and Christ exalted. Palm Sunday gives us a glimpse of the latter (Christ exalted) but it actually speaks of one of the great elements of the former (Christ humbled). Palm Sunday was the beginning of the end of Jesus' greatest act of humility, his death on Calvary.

The Confession of Faith -

The Apostolic Creed (Blue Hymnal page 5)

The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 311 (Blue Hymnal)

"No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet"

The Sermon – Text: Luke 19:28-42 (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

"What Would They Say?"

The Offertory – (Blue Hymnal page 7)

The Post-Sermon Hymn – 446 (Stanzas 1-5) (Blue Hymnal)

"Jesus, Your Blood and Righteousness"

The Prayers of the Day, Followed by the Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Closing Hymn – 446 (Stanzas 6-7) (Blue Hymnal)

"Jesus, Your Blood and Righteousness"

Silent Prayer

Welcome! - We warmly welcome any visitors who might be with us this morning and invite you to join us every Sunday at this time. St. Paul is a congregation in fellowship with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) – a conservative Lutheran synod with churches and missions throughout the United States and around the world. We are glad you are here. Thank you for letting us share the Word of God with you. Please record your visit in our Guest Book, and come again.

Attendance – Sunday (30) Average (40) Wednesday (16)

This Week at St. Paul:

Today	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday school and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Worship Service
	-11:00 a.m.	– Fellowship Hour
	-11:30 a.m.	– Church Council Meeting
Thursday	-7:00 p.m.	– Maundy Thursday Communion Service
Friday	-7:00 p.m.	– Good Friday Service
Next Sunday	-8:00 a.m.	– Men's Easter Breakfast
	-10:00 a.m.	– Worship Service
	-11:00 a.m.	– Fellowship Hour

CLC News – Missionary Peter Evensen has returned the call to Faith of Manchester (St. Louis area), MO. St. Stephen of Mountain View, CA has called Pastor Frank Gantt. Messiah of Eau Claire, WI has called Pastor Wayne Eichstadt. Mrs. Vanessa Wales and Mrs. Danielle Sippert have **accepted** their calls from Grace Lutheran School, Sleepy Eye, MN.

Holy Week Schedule – Holy Week begins this morning with our Palm Sunday service, and continues with our Maundy Thursday communion service and our Good Friday commemoration, both beginning at 7pm. Our Easter Sunday celebration begins with our Annual Men's Breakfast at 8 am followed by our 10 am Worship Service.

New Hymnal – Two reminders. First, that all of the information on the hymn boards refers to hymns and page numbers in the new blue hymnal. Second, see the sheet on the mailbox table if you would like to order additional copies of the new hymnal for home use. Please also note on that sheet if you have already taken a copy (or copies) home with you so that we know how many more we need to order.

Church Council Meeting – The Church Council is scheduled to meet this morning during the fellowship hour.