

## **“Love Speaks Loudest”**

Pastor Andy CastroLang

April 9, 2017

### **Scripture (NRSV):**

#### ***Matthew 21:1-17***

#### Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

**21** When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them back immediately.<sup>[a]</sup>” <sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

<sup>5</sup> “Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zechariah 9:9)

<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup> they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup> A very large crowd<sup>[b]</sup> spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David! (*O Save, Son of David!*)  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

<sup>10</sup> When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” <sup>11</sup> The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus entered the temple<sup>[c]</sup> and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. <sup>13</sup> He said to them, “It is written,

‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’;  
but you are making it a den of robbers.” (Jeremiah 7:11)

<sup>14</sup> The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them.

<sup>15</sup> But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard<sup>[d]</sup> the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became angry <sup>16</sup> and said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read,

‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies  
you have prepared praise for yourself?’” (Psalm 8:2)

<sup>17</sup> He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

---

### **Footnotes:**

- a. **Matthew 21:3** Or *‘The Lord needs them and will send them back immediately.’*
- b. **Matthew 21:8** Or *Most of the crowd*
- c. **Matthew 21:12** Other ancient authorities add *of God*
- d. **Matthew 21:15** Gk lacks *heard*

### **Sermon:**

The whole city, vs. 10 tells us, was in turmoil. They needed to know who else was filling the city with tension, with excitement, with anxiety. Crowds had shown up for the Passover celebration and so had some other significant figures.

- Pontius Pilate had arrived; with the power of Rome in his hands, pictures show such governors astride a great horse, with Roman soldiers marching in front and behind ...there would be no doubt that he had arrived and that Rome was there through him. Like a battalion of tanks and screaming warplanes overhead, he had arrived in battle regalia, because the Jewish people were celebrating their biggest holy day, Passover, and he needed to be prepared for anything and everything among this restless people.
- Herod had arrived. King of the Jews, but despised by many of his people as a collaborator with Rome, he too, had certainly arrived with pomp and circumstance, to join in the celebration as Passover approached.
- And now, Jesus arrives. And the crowd shouts, Hosanna! Which simply means, “O Save”. The crowd shouts, “O save us, Son of David!”

This will be problematic. There is already plenty of leadership in the ancient city of Jerusalem that believes it is leading, and saving, the people. The temple leaders, the military might of Rome, the house of Herod...they all believe the people should be led by them, obedient to them, serve them. They are the saviors of their people. Thank you very much!

There were probably people who shouted Hosanna to Herod, even perhaps to the Roman governor, Pilate. There were certainly many Jewish people who trusted the leadership of the temple priests, the well-educated Sadducees, and the righteous Pharisees.

All these tensions crowded into one hot tight spot, the city of Jerusalem.

And then, Jesus enters the temple, and gets aggressive, to say the least. He remembers the words of the prophet Jeremiah and looks around him in dismay. Buying and selling, not prayer, not praise?

So he drives them out, and then, shows the leaders what *is* the purpose of the temple: “The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them.” (Vs. 14) And the children continue to call after him, “O save us, Son of David”. (vs. 16)

There are so many competing voices in Jerusalem in this moment in history...the voices of conquerors, the voices of religious leaders, the voices of angry and oppressed people shouting for release...

The voice of Jesus is not loud, yet it is clear. And Jesus is clear, even when he does not speak. His entire life speaks for him.

- He comes to his own humbly, riding on a donkey. He comes to his own, riding on a donkey like the beloved king of the past, King David.
- He comes to restore the temple for grateful worship with anger at injustice and strength for freedom.
- In the temple, he restores the people to health.
- He reminds them yet again, of the visions of the prophets, Zachariah, and Isaiah; of purifying, and restoring justice and peace, to the people of the Lord.
- He reminds them of the calls of the psalmists; listen again to Psalm 8.

## **Psalm 8 Divine Majesty and Human Dignity**

To the leader: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup>O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

<sup>2</sup> Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

<sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;

<sup>4</sup> what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals<sup>[a]</sup> that you care for them?

<sup>5</sup> Yet you have made them a little lower than God,<sup>[b]</sup> and crowned them with glory and honor.

<sup>6</sup> You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,

<sup>7</sup> all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

<sup>8</sup> the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

<sup>9</sup> O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Begin and end your life with praise of the One who created you, and who creates all things in their beauty and wonder. *Be awed before the God who shares of the glory and the beauty of creation with humanity, and to whom we should offer our thanks and praise.*

Amidst all the competing messages of that distressed and distressing time; in the midst of the competing messages of our own days, our own distressing times...it would be well for us to hear Jesus' words...

- To remember the Lord our Sovereign, who is majestic in all the earth, creator of stars and moon, the glory of the heavens, the splendor of the earth.
- Who is mindful of the human creation and crowns us with glory and honor, and gives us all creation to share and enjoy.
- Who calls us to protect and serve life, for peace and for all.
- Who calls us into communion with God's own self and one another and the entirety of creation; a communion that begins and ends in grateful praise.

Jesus speaks the will of God, the design of God for creation. And it is the loudest voice of all, for it sings through every plant, every person, every molecule, in every day and every night.

May your eyes be opened, and your ears unplugged, so that you can really see, and really hear, the loudest voice of all in the cacophony of human need and confusion...the voice of love and restoration, which is the voice of God in Jesus.

Amen.