

JJ¹

Did you know there is such a thing as ringing rocks? There are certain rocks in just a few places around the world with rocks that ring like a bell or metal pipe when you hit them with a hammer. The nearest place is out in Pennsylvania. In these boulder fields not all the rocks ring, just certain ones. Some will ring like a bell and others will sound like regular rocks when you hit them. No one has yet been able to explain exactly why this happens.

There are always new and fascinating things to discover in God's beautiful creation. If he wanted to, God could make shouting rocks too. In fact, today in our text we hear Jesus say if the people didn't sing his praises, **"the stones would cry out!"**

Jesus said these words to some men who told him to keep his followers quiet about what they were saying. Most of the Pharisees didn't believe that Jesus was the promised Savior. To boil it down, he wasn't the Savior they wanted. For generations, the people of Israel had been misled by false teachers who taught that the coming Messiah was going to be an earthly king. A king who would get rid of the pagan Romans and restore the kingdom of Israel like in the days of kings David and his son, Solomon.

Time and again, Jesus had to remind the people that he didn't come to be a king of this world but that his throne was in heaven. He even had to tell his closest followers, the disciples, multiple times before they understood. In fact, they didn't fully understand until after Jesus rose from the dead.

Although many people didn't fully understand exactly what it meant for Jesus to be the promised Messiah, a great number of people had followed him from Galilee, and now many more heard about his approach to Jerusalem and the crowd got bigger and bigger. There were even more people around the area of Jerusalem than usual because the greatest festival of the Old Testament was taking place later that week—Passover.

Jesus had begun the day in a village called Bethany. This is where Mary and Martha lived with their brother, Lazarus, who not too long ago, Jesus had raised from the dead. They left Bethany and began the two mile journey over the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. Now if you want to picture the size of the Mount of Olives, think of Rib Mountain in Wausau, and you have a pretty good idea. But before they go over the top of the mountain, they come to the small village of Bethphage where Jesus told two of his disciples to **"Go to the village**

¹ JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

ahead of you. When you enter it, you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you will say this: 'The Lord needs it.' "

This is exactly what they found. The disciples put their cloaks on the donkey's back and Jesus rode this donkey into Jerusalem. Unlike any king this world has ever seen, Jesus is gentle and humble and rides on a donkey! When kings and rulers show up, they usually come with all kinds of pomp and circumstance. When our president travels, hundreds of thousands, sometimes even millions of dollars are spent depending on the occasion. He rides around in a limousine that is supposed to survive a nuclear blast! There's a show of power with the massive amounts of protection from the Secret Service and the military which says to the bad guys, "Don't you mess with me!"

But not Jesus. Oh yes, a great crowd went before and followed behind Jesus, but they were common people. There wasn't any fancy red carpet, just people's cloaks and branches from palm trees. Yet this is the One the people praise saying, **"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"**

Even though they might not fully understand what they're saying, they're right. This isn't just a king, but The King who comes in the name of the Lord. That means he is sent by the Lord. He's the Savior God's people had been waiting for since the Garden of Eden. He is the one who brings peace. That same peace the angels sang about at his birth is the peace he is now bringing to the world through his suffering and death here in Jerusalem. He has come to bring glory to himself and his heavenly Father through the gory

cross! He doesn't come so that he would be served, but to serve his people. He doesn't come into his city to sit on a throne of gold, but to be nailed to a wooden cross. He doesn't come to receive a crown encrusted with jewels, but to have a crown of thorns pressed down on his head. He does all this to bring the peace of forgiveness to all people.

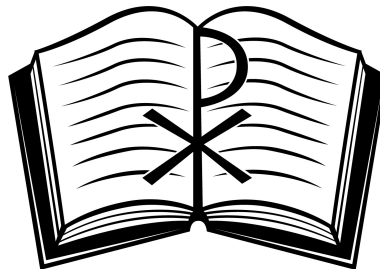


W E E K

This is what he has come to do, and yet the Pharisees want the people to be quiet? Friends, even though we don't have the Pharisees of Jesus' day telling us to be quiet, there are the Pharisees of the world around us today, and the Pharisee each one of us has living in our sinful heart. This sinful world and our sinful nature want us to shut our mouths. Just think of how often you have praised your Savior in this house of worship, but were afraid to speak about him out in the world. Just think of all the times you have called out to him to save

you within these walls, but outside have considered him to be your last resort. Just think of how often you cling to his peace here in church, but then wring your hands in worry the rest of the week.

Friends, don't listen to the Pharisees of this sinful world or the Pharisee living in your own sinful heart! **DON'T LET THE ROCKS SHOUT!** Don't even give them a chance! Yes, Jesus does not look like the king the world and your sinful heart would ever want. He comes to conquer his enemies by surrendering to them! He crushes his opposition by letting them crush him! He comes as one whose path to kingly exaltation will include willful humiliation and death! But this is the King we need marching into Jerusalem this week for us. This humble King is our only hope!



But Jesus comes in this way so that we wouldn't be driven away from him, but drawn to him. He comes in the name of the Lord. He comes to bring you the forgiveness of sins and life eternal! He brings you into a kingdom that will last forever! He rules in your hearts now by faith, promising to bring you into his heavenly kingdom!

Because of that, friends, be proud and eager to tell others about him. Go and invite your neighbors and friends and family members to come and see what Easter really means at our worship services this week and next Sunday. They aren't going to find out going through the stores in town. They're not going to find out by watching TV. Be proud to tell them who Jesus really is. Tell them he's our God, our King, our Savior and keep those rocks silent. Amen.

SDG²

² SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for "To God Alone Be The Glory". This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn't about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

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