

DATE: March 28 (Palm Sunday)

SCRIPTURE: Luke 19:29-44

TITLE: Who will Shout?

Luke 19:29-44 Jesus plans his entry into Jerusalem and weeps over the city

The events of 2020 helped me realize with more clarity than ever that I believe we have been misreading Palm Sunday. Most of the music surrounding Palm Sunday in our hymnal describes a joyous procession. I am but one of many preachers who has described Palm Sunday as a parade—a joyful and triumphal entry of Jesus into the city.

I believe a closer look at the story as told by Luke reveals that this was something different. It was not a joyful parade. It was a planned protest. It was carefully orchestrated, meticulously planned, and symbolically enacted. Everything about Jesus' entrance into the city was communicating something very important: The Kingdom of God is not like the Kingdom of Rome. The Peace of God is not like the Peace of Rome.

While Jesus was entering the city on the east side, riding on a young donkey and going straight to the Temple, he was surrounded by his disciples shouting about peace. Perhaps at the same time there was another procession coming into town on the west side.

Pilate was entering the city with his Roman guard. He was riding the war horse, was surrounded by armored soldiers. He was representing the one who called himself the Son of God, and he was bringing what the Romans themselves called "The Good News of the Peace of Rome." He marched past Herod's Palace and reminded everyone just how the peace of Rome was secured.

Jesus planned a protest march. It was a march for peace. It was a march against the peace that came with capitulation to Roman occupation. He was protesting the status-quo, don't-rock-the-boat kind of peace that benefit the powerful and the comfortable.

It was a march against the peace of Rome that came at the end of the Legionnaire's spear and the tax collector's purse string.

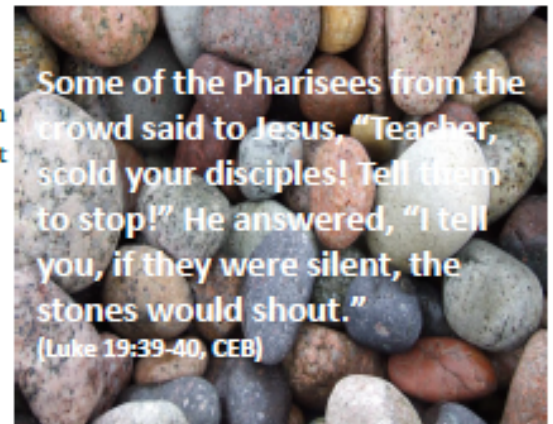
At the end of this protest march he staged a sit-in at the Temple, but first he cried. He wept because he knew the people could

not see the path that made for peace. They saw only capitulation or revolution. Within a generation, the people chose revolution, and the peace of Rome came crashing down on the city. In 70, Jerusalem was sacked, thousands were slaughtered, and the Temple was razed.

Jesus led a protest march into the city, and the Pharisees (who were among the crowd as his disciples, not as enemies to be confronted) told him to protest a different way. They worried that his disruption would endanger the peace. And they were right.

In just a few days the peace of Rome would come crashing down on Jesus. His way of peace through building community was denied. His way of peace through forgiveness and love was betrayed. His offer of a third way was rejected. So we join with Jesus in his lament.

The makers of peace are still rejected. Those that try to forge a third way between revolution and capitulation to Empire are still reviled. Those who seek peace with justice and community are still executed and assassinated. So we lament. With Jesus we weep. There are no palms in this story of Palm Sunday. There are only shouts of "peace" and a yearning that someday we as a people will learn this true Way.



Some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, scold your disciples! Tell them to stop!" He answered, "I tell you, if they were silent, the stones would shout."

(Luke 19:39-40, CEB)