

# Palm Sunday: Let the Rocks Be Kept Silent

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(Luke 19:39-40)

## I. Introduction

- A. When I was a kid, we didn't really make that big of a deal of Easter
  - 1. Our church taught that every Sunday was Resurrection Sunday
    - a. We didn't do anything special on Easter (*were more people there*)
    - b. We did get Easter baskets; we'd never have brought them to church
      - 1) I got to eat one piece of candy before church (very stressful)
      - 2) And I get a new suit to wear to church on Easter Sunday
      - 3) Same suit I'd wear every Sunday until next Easter. Special?
  - 2. And we would have never expected a resurrection sermon on Easter
    - a. Professor: Preach resurrection at Christmas and birth at Easter
    - b. So let's all stand and sing a couple of verses of "*Silent Night*"
  - 3. Might we miss something not following the liturgical church calendar?
    - a. Might having a special theological focus help us to... well focus
    - b. Does NOT having special Sundays make all Sundays special?
    - c. Or does it make none of them very special? The jury may be out.
- B. Today is Palm Sunday on the church, but we aren't doing anything special
  - 1. Palm Sunday points to Triumphant Entry of Jesus (all four of gospels)
    - a. It is a "*movable feast*" because it's date changes along with Easter
    - b. This is the first day of Passion Week (*passio*; Latin for "suffering")
  - 2. It's called "*Palm Sunday*" for the palm branches laid before Jesus
    - a. Some churches go all out today and buy palm branches to wave
      - 1) I thought about having you have cash as we read that part of story
      - 2) That would have been a great time to pass the collection baskets
    - b. Other churches rent a donkey for someone to ride down aisle (*Roger said we couldn't do that because he knew who'd be cleaning up*)
      - 1) All of this is to emphasize a powerful and important gospel story
      - 2) It's story we don't stress enough; we don't have special Sundays
  - 3. We will focus on it today; first let's read it (**Reading: [Matt 21:6-11](#)**)

## II. Let the Rocks Be Kept Silent

- A. Some people just know how to make a dramatic entrance, right?
1. It all begins in a dramatic moment we likely run right by (**Luke 9:21**)
    - a. Literally, it says that Jesus “*set his face to go to Jerusalem*” (ESV)
    - b. We might say that he, “*Set his jaw*” or he “*gritted his teeth*”
      - 1) You know that determined look when dash for the car in rain?
      - 2) All else that happens from this point is on the road to Jerusalem
  2. And when Jesus finally gets there, everyone shouts his name. Not bad!
    - a. Scene here taken right out of the coronation of Jehu (**2 Kings 9:13**)
    - b. As we saw, the use of the palm branches was connected to worship
  3. And they shouted what we’ve been singing all morning—“*Hosanna!*”
    - a. “*Hosanna*” is the Greek form of the Hebrew word meaning “*Save!*”
    - b. It’s asking to be saved and thanks for being saved (**Psa 118:25-27**)
- B. What would it have been like in crowd shouting “*Hosannas*” to Jesus?
1. Would that have been exciting? What would we have done?
    - a. Would we approach it differently than our praise and worship?
    - b. But this is different! Jesus is right there, riding in on a donkey?
    - c. Isn’t Jesus is right here with us today? Should we get a donkey?
  2. What do we do if someone gets carried away in worship?
    - a. We have no idea, right? That has simply never happened here (*Ushers run over and shush him, “Sir, you just need to settle down...”*)
    - b. Never happened. Oh, we do have a few folks who raise hands
    - c. Ans occasionally, some people do have to fight back a few tears
      - 1) Why fight them back? We’re afraid to let ourselves go, right
      - 2) Alexander Campbell one cried out, “Hallelujah!” Was mortified!
  3. Why? Because people get uncomfortable when others get carried away
    - a. That happened the first Palm Sunday... with kids! (**Matt 21:15-16**)
      - 1) You know grumpy old man who yells at kids, “*Get off my lawn*”
      - 2) That’s the Jewish leaders; can’t have kids getting carried away
    - b. Maybe that is exactly what we need; people taking praise seriously

- C. Luke has a different take on the grumpy old men theme ([Luke 19:37-39](#))
1. Pharisees are offended when the disciples get carried away in worship
    - a. You, it's way too easy to offend Pharisees when you worship
      - 1) Sing too many songs, or too few songs, or sing the wrong songs
      - 2) Change the order of service or quote the wrong guy in sermon
      - 3) Bruce Jackson told of a guy put off by a song after closing prayer
    - b. The disciples were too carried away in praise... in praise of Jesus
    - c. Pharisees demand Jesus make his disciples stop all the commotion
  2. Jesus responds, "*If they don't worship, the rocks will*" ([Luke 19:40](#))
    - a. It wasn't that everyone understood WHY they were worshipping
      - 1) Remember, Matthew said that some in the crowd were clueless
      - 2) John says some of the clueless ones were apostles! ([John 12:16](#))
    - b. It wasn't that they understood all of the ramifications of Palm Sunday
      - 1) Remember, he set his face and gritted his teeth to get to this point
      - 2) The king had come to Jerusalem! There HAD to be worship!
    - c. If the people didn't worship him, the rocks would cry out his name!
- D. Will we let the rocks cry out? Or will we do what we were created for?
1. Why did God choose us? What is His purpose? *Praise of His glory!*
    - a. Am I saying that our whole purpose in life is to praise His glory?
    - b. I'm not saying that; I'm saying that Paul said that ([Eph 1:11-14](#))
    - c. If we don't praise in our worship and in our life—stones will cry out
  2. Wayne Watson wrote an old song that riffs on this theme (*Almighty*)
    - a. In the song, we as worshippers accept our responsibility to praise
    - b. We give voice to what all creation declares—let the rocks be silent
 

*The beasts of the field, the birds of the air are silent to call out your name*  
*The earth has no voice and I have no choice but to magnify God unashamed*  
*Let the rocks be kept silent for one more day;*  
*Let the whole world sing out, let the people say*  
*Almighty, most holy God; Faithful through the ages!*  
*Almighty, most holy Lord, Glorious, almighty God*
    - c. Will we let the rocks be silent? Will we magnify God unashamed?
  3. What starts in our worship must continue in our lives ([song video](#))

### III. Conclusion

- A. Why were the Pharisees so alarmed & intimidated by cries of Hosanna?
1. Where were priests such grumpy old men on that first Palm Sunday?
    - a. It wasn't that they weren't anticipating the coming of the Messiah
    - b. Messianic expectation was high— why the crowds were so eager
  2. It was right celebration, much like one given Judas Maccabeus in 165
    - a. Was wrong king! “*This isn't the king you're looking for*” (Star Wars)
    - b. Real kings come in pomp and power; they come on war horses
      - 1) This king was meek and gentle and came riding on a donkey!
      - 2) OK, that's exactly what the prophets predicted (**Matt 21:4-5**)
    - c. But Israel was occupied territory, ruled and runover by the Romans
      - 1) They wanted a mighty warrior king to lead them to freedom
      - 2) And in a few days, shouts of “*Hosanna*” became “*Crucify him!*”
  3. Jesus wasn't the king they were looking for... and so they killed him
- B. What is the point? To better “*magnify God unashamed?*” Good start!
1. Maybe a better point is that we need to make sure why we worship
    - a. If Jesus is really our Lord and King, then he gets to set the agenda
    - b. People in story had their own agenda; wanted a certain kind of king
      - 1) In **John 6:15**, a crowd (mod) rallied to make Jesus king by force
      - 2) But then he started teaching hard things, requiring hard things
      - 3) By **verse 66**, they left; he wasn't the king they were looking for
  2. If Jesus is king, we must worship and serve Him based on HIS agenda
    - a. Jesus does not promise to make us rich and successful (**Luke 18:22**)
    - b. He doesn't promise to solve problems or resolve issues (**John 16:66**)
    - c. He doesn't promise to make our family life perfect (**Matt 10:34-36**)
    - d. He doesn't promise to heal us and save us from death (**John 11:14**)
    - e. And he never promised to make America great again (**John 18:26**)
  3. If those are your agenda, then Jesus isn't the king you are looking for!
    - a. Jesus agenda is to get you to God; he came to seek and save the lost
    - b. To really shout your “*Hosanna*,” you must accept him on His terms