



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

April 10, 2022

Pastor Randy Ott

6th Sunday in Lent—Palm Sunday

First Lesson: [Isaiah 45:22-25](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 24

Second Lesson: [Hebrews 12:1-3](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Luke 19:28-40](#)

### Keep The Stones Quiet!

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Now is the time of God's favor. Now is the day of salvation. Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

When I was growing up my dad had a lot of things that he would say over and over and over again. I would hear him all the time when times were tough say "The good Lord will take care of us." When times were good I'd hear him say over and over again "God has been good to us. The Lord has been good to us." I heard those things a lot growing up, so I heard God as a part of my daily life growing up.

But I also heard my dad rebuke the sinful nature that lives inside of me when I would do something stupid. When I got myself in trouble because I did something that just wasn't that bright, one of the things dad said to me over and over and over and over and over again was "What's the matter with you? You got rocks for brains?" I don't know where that saying came from, but I heard that one quite often as I was growing up, which I suppose is a way of saying "Why are you being so foolish? Why are you making such bad decisions?" It's not like you have rocks in your head. The synapses wouldn't fire very fast and evidently mine weren't firing very fast either. I made poor choices. I did foolish things and got myself in trouble.

This morning Jesus tells us if we aren't going to praise Him and put Him first in our lives, we kind of have rocks for brains. If we aren't going to live to His glory and praise Him, He'll make sure that something lives to His glory and praises Him. That's what He said on that Palm Sunday. The rocks would cry out if those people would be quiet on that day. You hear it throughout Scripture that God will see to it that someone gives Him glory. Not because He is egotistical. Not because He needs it. But because His love, His grace, His mercy, all the things He does for people who have turned their back on Him,

people who think they don't need Him, and He still patiently reaches out day after day after day with this message of "I took away your sins. You couldn't and you didn't. Yet I, for the glory that was set before me, endured the cross and scorned its shame." That kind of love surrounds us each and every day. If we're going to be bored by it, He is going to see to it that something praises Him, including rocks. So this morning we want to see why we would keep the rocks quiet and I suppose also, how we shut the stones up.

We've been following through the Sundays in Lent in our Gospel readings Jesus' journey to Jerusalem for the last time because He was on His way to suffer and die. We've seen Him do incredible things. We've seen Him teach. We've seen Him do all kinds of things. But now, here it is. It's the culmination of why He was born in the world. It's the culmination of why the angels sang "Peace on earth; good will to men" ([Luke 2](#)) and all of those things. It's coming now. The reference after He had said these things in Luke was the Parable of the Talents. ([Matthew 25:14-30](#)) How eventually the King comes back and either you acknowledge the King or you are destroyed. That was the gist of that parable that Jesus had just told.

He stays in Bethany and Bethphage and the next day He gets up and goes into Jerusalem. As He gets to the top of the Mount of Olives, the crowds gather. But before that, you see Jesus display His divinity, His Godliness in small things. He tells His disciples, "Go ahead and you are going to find a foal of donkey tied there. Say to the owner 'The Lord needs it' and he'll let you take it." They go and they find it just as He said. In that little detail, God/Jesus was actively fulfilling prophecies from the Old Testament. "Your King comes to you having salvation on a donkey, on the foal of donkey." ([Zechariah 9:9](#)) He fulfills all of Scripture for us. But we see God knew exactly where that donkey would be and exactly what the owner would say and exactly how the disciples would answer. He is God, not just of the big things of taking away our sins. He is also the God of the little things. He is the God that is involved in minute details in people's lives. We tend to forget that sometimes.

As we go through life, we think God's not worthy of glory at times because He has let things into our life that we don't like. God has never promised He is going to see to it that everything on this side of heaven is perfect. He tells us it's through much suffering. It's through patient endurance. "If they hated me, they are going to hate you." ([John 15:18](#)) He tells us life on this side of heaven is going to be hard. But He also tells us "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." ([Hebrews 13:5](#)) He also tells us "My strength is sufficient for you. My grace is made perfect in your weakness." ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)) He does tell us His love is there every day for us. Yet you and I, we tend to doubt it at times.

He knew where the donkey was. He rode on a foal of donkey that no one had ever ridden on and saw to it that when there was this crowd throwing stuff in front of Him, the foal of the donkey didn't get upset. That's kind of amazing! He is the God of little

details, in your life and my life, as much as He is the God of the big details of the cross. So don't think He doesn't care or He doesn't know. He cares and He knows! I suppose that's one of the reasons why we want to live to His glory and praise Him to **Keep the Stones Quiet**.

As He does come in, the crowd comes. The other Gospel writers talk about the palm branches that they throw in front of Him, but here Luke just mentions the cloaks that they put on the path and not just on the donkey. The people were praising God the way they knew how. ***"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*** Whether they were only thinking of peace between them and the Romans or not, they were proclaiming, whether they recognized it or not, why Jesus had come to Jerusalem. I find that statement in Hebrews to be absolutely fascinating. "Who for the glory set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame." He knew why He was coming to Jerusalem. He knew He was going to be rejected. He knew that some of these people that were shouting "Hosanna" were going to shout "Crucify" later in the week. Yet He still came. He still fulfilled everything God had set forth so that our sins would be paid for. Not just the people there. Not just some other people; for your sins and my sins because we are part of the whole world that He made this sacrifice for. He does all this to bring us this peace.

This peace is the most precious thing in the world that you and I could have; this knowledge that if we lay our heads on our pillow tonight and we can't lift them up in the morning, because He has called us home, we're going home. We aren't going to face the wages that our sins have deserved because He lived and died in our place and took away the guilt of our sins. That is the most mind boggling thing in the world, that these nails through His hands and the agony of hell on the cross is what He calls glory, because it benefits us. I can't fathom that. But I do know at times I (and I've seen it in others) act as though God maybe owes that to us. *I've known all my life that Jesus loves me and took away my sins. Yeah, yeah, I know that. Let's get on to something else.* I think at times we fail to **Keep the Stones Quiet** because we've stopped understanding exactly what we are and exactly what Jesus is and we shape God into our view of Him instead of Him shaping us into His view of life.

Here's what I mean. This last Wednesday I met with the confirmation class in the afternoon, like I always do. Because they have a hard time staying awake, I drink coffee too so I don't fall asleep before they do. In the afternoon I'm tired. I'm old. We started out by talking about the kids sitting up here last Sunday, on Good Confession Sunday. A couple of them were the most nervous people I have ever seen. You could almost feel the floor shaking because their legs were shaking badly as they sat up here. I told them beforehand "It will be okay. Once we get going, you're just going to talk with me about Jesus like you do in class every week. By the time it's done you're going to say 'That was kind of fun.'" They didn't believe a word I said. But last Wednesday when we talked

about it, they did say "Yeah, by the time we got done, the talking about Jesus part was fun. It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. It was just like class, pastor."

That's what I want. I want people who, their whole life, want to talk about this incredible God we have. That's how we **Keep the Stones Quiet**. We speak His praises. We want to do it. Not "Oh, no! I'm terrified because I did it once and that was so scary that I'm never doing it again!" I want it to be comfortable.

But then they amazed me. I didn't even need coffee to stay awake after some of the discussion that we had next because one of the things I said to them was "You know, right now, mom or dad or whoever is dropping you off for this class but in three weeks' time, for three of you, that isn't going to happen anymore. So what are you going to do to keep growing in your faith? It's now going to be up to you. I'm no longer going to have that nice plastic-covered spoon and say to you 'Open the hanger. Here comes the airplane' and feed you the Gospel on a spoon. It's now going to be up to you! How are you going to feed your faith? How are you going to stay connected to Jesus? I've given you the basics. We trained you. Now how are you going to keep growing in your faith so that you **Keep the Stones Quiet** because I've seen way too many that don't keep growing?" I think part of it is our fault. We kind of give them the impression "There, you're done with that." We put a nice gown on them and a flower on them and we throw them a party and say "There, you're done with that." I think we're idiots because if we give anyone the impression you're done growing in Christ, that's a "me" problem, isn't it?

The only way we are going to **Keep the Stones Quiet** is if we continually grow and know our God better and better and if we don't think that somehow He owes us something because we see ourselves for what we are. What sinners we are and how little we have to offer God and yet He loved us anyhow. This is how we **Keep the Stones Quiet**. Otherwise you're going to end up like the Pharisees and go to Jesus and rebuke Him and say "Teacher, tell those guys to knock that off! Saying you're the Son of David; that's a title for the Messiah! You aren't a Messiah!"

Jesus not only fulfills Scripture by saying the foal of a donkey and all of that stuff, He also fulfills Scripture by saying "God is worthy of praise." We heard that in Isaiah. We heard it in our Psalm. We heard that God is always going to be praised. It's either we're going to have the privilege of being the ones offering that praise, or we're going to be silent to our shame, or we're going to be upset with those who praise Him (like the Pharisees were).

God, His love, His mercy, and His grace are all so amazing when we understand it. When we understand what we are, when we don't take for granted and think our sins are no

big deal. Our sins killed Jesus. Our sins caused Him to leave heaven. Our sins earned for us the wages of sin, which is death. Don't put lipstick on that and tell me it isn't a big deal. It's a big deal!

He did it for us! And if we're not going to live to His glory and if we're going to take that for granted and say "Well, I can meet Jesus as I go up hunting on a crisp, winter morning." No, no, you don't meet how He took away your sins there! You see a powerful God that could create a world and who hates sin. You aren't going to hit anything if that's what you're focused on. You're going to be shaking too much. Where you see that God loves you and takes away your sins is in Word and Sacrament. If you spend time with Word and Sacrament, you'll **Keep the Stones Quiet** because the Spirit will fill your heart and move you to want to live to His glory. Not have to!

All those excuses that we throw out about why God isn't worth my time, they'll just melt away like butter when our eyes are focused on Jesus. That's the only way we're going to shut the stones up. We need to encourage each other to keep our eyes on Jesus. When we look in the mirror, don't look with excuses. Don't look with rationalizations, look and see a sinner, but look and see a sinner that Jesus died for. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\(Philippians 4:7.\)](#) Amen.