

The Stones Would Shout

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Camrose United Church
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Psalm 118 · The King's procession to the Temple
Luke 19:29–40 · Jesus enters Jerusalem

The disciples were shouting. The Pharisees told Jesus to tell the disciples to stop. But Jesus said, If these were silent, the stones would shout.

As he rode along, he thought about those words, The stones would shout. As so often happened they were words that had just come to him—inspired by the Spirit that was ever with his—and the full significance of what he had said came to him only later, gradually. So as he rode along, he thought about the Stones that would shout. The ancient stones—the rocks of ages.

He remembered the story of Jacob, in the wilderness alone at night, laying his head on a stone. And in the night, the vision Angels descending on the stairway from Heaven. That stone became part of the altar at that place—Bethel, the house of God—place of the Holy.

Today, that stone shouts *This is the house of God, the place of the Holy. From the beginning, there has been a promise to the House of Israel. And now is the time of fulfilment.*

And as he rode on he saw in the faces of those crowding and shouting around him the expectant longing of the ages—longing for the fulfilment of the ancient promise.

Then he remembered the tablets of stone as Moses came down from the mountain with the Commandments of the Covenant for God's chosen people—the Covenant that has been forged and broken and reforged again and again throughout the Centuries.

And Jesus thought, today those stones shout, *The God of the Covenant looks for righteousness, and again finds such iniquity, apathy, cruelty. So today a new Covenant is written: this time not carved in stone, but written on Your Hearts.*

And he could feel the warmth of the Hearts of those around him, open and ready.

Jesus looked beyond the crowd of disciples and saw the Roman Centurions, armed and ready for action. He thought of how dangerous it was for him to be doing what he was doing, and how powerless his people were in the face of their oppressors. Then he thought of one small, smooth stone selected from the bag, hanging around David's waste, carefully set into the sling, then buried in Goliath's skull, bringing the Philistine crashing to the ground.

And today, Jesus thought, that stone shouts, *Take courage, all you who are beaten down and oppressed, for God is on your side, on the side of Human Dignity and Worth and Freedom.*

And as he rode on, Jesus saw in the eyes of the shouting multitude around him the Courage to defy even the Centurions with God at their side.

Then he remembered the stones in the wilderness, after his baptism, when Satan challenged him to change the stones into bread. It was tempting because so many people live in poverty, so many starve to death.

But today, those stones shout to us, *No amount of bread will end poverty as long as powers that be have hearts of stone. It is the Word of God, heard in the love of Christ that transforms hearts into compassion and justice.*

And Jesus looked at the crowd around him and he saw peoples' hearts joined together as one in the Spirit of human family, discovering the power of the body of God's presence in the world.

As he rode on, he realized that this City and this world had been build of many stones—the conventional ways, the laws, the status quo—but the stone the builders rejected has now become the chief corner stone of a new house, a new way of life.

And as he rode toward the ancient Temple, Jesus could hear that chief cornerstone shouting, *The last shall be first; the one who seeks to save her life will lose it; God's foolishness is greater than human wisdom; God's weakness is greater than human strength; love your enemies; you must be as a child to enter the kingdom of heaven.*

He could hear in their shouting voices the longing for a wisdom that would set them free from the dead conventions of the past and restore true joy to their living.

Sitting astride the colt, Jesus looked down and saw the stones lying by the road. He thought of a woman caught in adultery and an angry mob ready to stone her to death; not one of them sinless, despite their self-righteous arrogance—just lost souls, afraid to face the truth about themselves.

And he heard those stones say, *Our merciful God does not condemn, but only stands ready to embrace us in our brokenness and our shame. Ever offering to wash away the sins that cling to our souls, to let all that we regret be forgotten, to let life begin anew with a clean heart and a restored soul.*

And Jesus felt the energy of the crowd around him, people aching for the words of forgiveness that enables people to return to their loving God, to feel the arms of divine grace wrapped around them, holding them close, reassuring and comforting.

Then he looked at the people and the City of Jerusalem and the whole world around him and he thought about what he was about to do— why he had come— and he realized that it was as if all Humanity had been Crucified and laid in the Tomb, sealed with a huge stone. He had come to roll away the stone so that people might live again, might be born again.

And Jesus saw in every one of us living stones, and he prayed that we would let ourselves be built into a spiritual house where the living stones would shout, *God is with us and in us lives the Immortal Love that brings Peace to the World and the Immortal Wisdom that brings meaning to life and the Immortal Spirit that fills our hearts with Joy.*

And as he rode on, bathed in the shouting of the ecstatic Disciples, he though, *Shout, people, shout your Praises to God for ever! For if you ever fall silent then even the Stones will Shout.*