

**“Shaking The Foundations”  
Luke 19:28-40  
Rev. Steve McCoy  
First United Methodist Church  
Marquette, MI  
April 1, 2007  
Palm Sunday**

In the last Sunday in Lent we come to the last in our series on confronting our fears and doubts along the Lenten Journey. We have talked about doubting ourselves, we have talked about fearing and doubting others, we have talked about doubting God, and have talked about fearing the past and doubting and fearing the future.

Now as we come to the Day of Palm Sunday and we shout “Hosanna in the highest” there is still a fear of what lies ahead. A fear of how others respond. Even though we are an Easter people, who live in the resurrection, we take this journey every year to remind us that we are so by God’s grace, and to be reminded that we can always be striving to do better for God.

When we get to this week we really just want to get through it so we can get to the celebration. Yet we are reminded that this week begins in celebration. The people are shouting and cheering as Jesus enters the city and the Pharisees are afraid of a mob scene. They are afraid it will be seen that they cannot control the crowd, so they tell Jesus to keep these people quiet! But all he can say is the stones would cry out. So much so that the foundations would shake. Translation: no one can stop what God is about to do, as joyful as it is and as painful it will become, God cannot be stopped.

The late Mike Yaconelli, and evangelist and long time President of Youth Specialties until his untimely death a few years ago, told of how he was ordained in the Assemblies of God church. He was giving a seminar to a Group of AG pastors and the outward call of God was evident to them right from the start. The spirit of God could not

be contained. They talked among themselves that in fact they believe that God's spirit was leading Mike to be ordained. Now I won't debate our church polity vs. theirs but in the end the pastors researched it and could not find anything that prevented them from ordaining him as an AG minister. Mike resisted at first and finally they said no we need to do this because God is doing something in you and that must be acknowledged. So Mike relented to that outward call and allowed them to ordain him. What he said that was so funny is that even while the pastors were in the midst of ordaining him they had that slight look of concern and worry as if to say "Are we gonna get in trouble for this?" Well nobody got in trouble but soon after the rule was changed. He went on to say speaking about Youth ministry that if there is not a rule in your church because of something that you did, then you're not doing your job right.

Jesus was always about shaking the foundations so the glory of God may be revealed through him, the Pharisees were about guarding the rules. They were afraid of what might happen. In 2000 years this has not changed. Are we in the church afraid of what might happen if we go against convention, if we break from the norm? If God is in the lead but it cannot help but succeed.

The other thing that we must remember is God will do what God will do. When the spirit of God is moving someone somewhere will catch on. And the stones will cry out, it won't be able to be contained because God will not contain it. Are we willing to listen and follow where God is leading or will we be silent.

This means getting to the very foundations of what we value most is that we are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ. It means we must take risks, up to and including possibly causing trouble for the glory of God.

In his book *Credo*, William Sloane Coffin makes the point that Jesus entered Jerusalem as a prophet. He saw the real trouble makers were not the ignorant and cruel, but the intelligent and corrupt. In contrast to so many of today's preachers, warns Coffin, Jesus knew that "Love your enemies" didn't mean "Don't make any!"

But we know that this day of triumph will turn to tragedy. We know that what is to come next is not pretty. We also like to think that had we been there this never would have happened. Now many a preacher make the common mistake that the same people who cheered Jesus were the same ones shouting "Crucify him!" on Friday. But that is not the case. It was the Pahrisees and the Sanhedrin, that conspired with Judas, it was they who brought Jesus to Pilate, it was they who said release Barrabas, and it was they who stood in smug thinking that they had one, and that all would be normal. They used the rules to get rid of this trouble maker. It was the cheering crowd and the 12 who stood by in silence and cowered before their power and the might of Rome.

We too often want to avoid the tragedy of what is to come and get on with our lives, the problem is that God will not let us. This day, this week symbolizes what goes on in our lives everyday. Peter Gomes, professor of homiletics at Harvard Divinity School and preacher at the Memorial Church there, writes in his book, *Sermons*, we like the "festival frenzy of the palms, that marvelous chaos which we organize each year ... a festive dress rehearsal for an Easter triumph ... Palm Sunday addicts like the procession, they like the anticipated glory of Jesus, and they love the sense that the Lenten gloom imposed these last six weeks has at least risen if not fully departed" [68-69]. ... That is the only reality: that God's love is the only thing that makes sense out of suffering, conflict or tragedy. God's love does not do away with conflict, or suffering, or

tragedy ... God's love is the thing that makes it possible to bear it, to see it, to share in it, to understand it, and to pass through it" [70].<sup>1</sup>

So as we prepare to gather at his table, and we sing Hosanna in the Highest, Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord, let us not be afraid, because we will acknowledge that despite our best efforts, God cannot and will not be stopped. The stones will cry out if they have to but our actions will speak louder than our words, and together with God we can shake the foundations and do our part as builders of the new heaven and the new Earth. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Gomes, Peter. "*Beyond Tragedy*", Sermons. Harper San Francisco, 1998.