



## \* **“WHEN IT ALL GOES BAD”**

**Biblical Text: Luke 19:28-40**

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\*It started with such promise. \*Such joy, celebration, hopes and dreams. \*But by the end of the week, it all turned bad. But I’m getting ahead of myself. Let’s start at the beginning, where our text does, with Luke 19:28. So what does it say there?

\*The Bible says, \**“After this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.”*<sup>1</sup> After what? Look up to Luke 19, verse 1. It was after healing and teaching in Jericho, that’s what.

Most of our children, who are singing this morning know that, even if they can’t quite remember where it took place. And you know it too, even if you don’t know you know it, or have never read Luke 19. \* It involved a man and a tree. \*

It tells us that Jesus called out to the chief tax collector, short in stature but tall in power, to come and follow him. \*And you know his name, you do. Sing with me...

*“Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and a wee little man was he.*

*He climbed up in a sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see.*

*And when the Savior passed him by he looked up in that tree. And he said?”*

See, I told you that you knew what happened before Jesus went on ahead to Jerusalem. But **why** did he go to Jerusalem? His message to Zacchaeus in \*Luke 19:10 said it clearly: *“For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”*<sup>2</sup>

On his way to Jerusalem, he passed the Mount of Olives where pilgrims can still visit today and thousand-year-old olive trees still grow, \*where his disciples found Jesus a ride to Jerusalem. My 17-year-old self would have preferred his ride to have been a 1969 Mustang, but Luke 19:30 says it was a \**“colt that had never been ridden.”*

We pick up the narrative beginning with verse 35: \* *“They brought (the colt) to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. \*As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road ... \*the disciples began to praise God ... saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”*<sup>3</sup>

Matthew 21, Mark 11 and John 12 tell us they were shouting, \**“Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.”* Those words should sound vaguely familiar. Sometimes on communion Sundays, we still say those ancient words.

<sup>1</sup> Luke 19:28, from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Luke 19:10, from the New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Luke 19:35-38, from the New Revised Standard Version.

Luke 19:39 says that the Pharisees tried to stop the celebration saying: \* *“Teacher, order your disciples to stop.”*<sup>4</sup> But there was no stopping the celebration. Not yet. \* *“He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”*<sup>5</sup>

It hadn't yet turned to ... It hadn't yet gone bad. But it did by the end of the week. All the Gospels agree. What began with joyous shouts of \* *“Hosanna!”* ended with an angry mob demanding, \* *“Crucify him!”* And that wasn't the worst. \*

Along the way, on Holy Thursday, was his final meal with his disciples, \*one of whom would betray him. After his trial, his closest friend would deny knowing him, \*and by Good Friday, the day he was crucified, they all would turn away, leaving him to die alone. \* And this week, we re-enact the drama of that story in Holy Week.

Without that part of the story, \*though it is hard and sad to remember, what victory are we celebrating on Easter?

Don't get me wrong! I love the signs of Spring and the positive message of Easter.

But in the hardest times of life, if we just sing, *“Don't worry, be happy! It's Easter!”* it just doesn't give us the Good News we need.

### **We need the whole story!**

So, on Palm Sunday, we wave palms and remember the shout of \* *“Hosanna!”* so long ago. And our souls sing, *“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”* And the children always leave us with a smile. But afterwards...

The \*Holy Thursday service also helps us remember that friends sometimes fail each other. And that Jesus even then shared the bread and wine of forgiveness.

And the darkness of the \*Good Friday Tenebrae Service will remind us that, like we sometimes do, Jesus' closest companions turned away when he needed them most.

**\*But when it all went bad; Jesus' worst moments were not the end.**

And our worst moments aren't the end either!

That's the Good News of Holy Week. And if we go the distance with Jesus, if we don't skip the hard parts, we can see that out of all the hardness, hurt and pain, comes the promise and power of the Resurrection for us!

\*No one is immune from both good and bad in life. You would think that if anyone could or would, it would be the Son of God. But that's not what the Bible says.

<sup>4</sup> Op. Cit. Luke 19:39, from the [New Revised Standard Version](#).

<sup>5</sup> Op. Cit. Luke 19:40, from the [New Revised Standard Version](#).

The Bible says Jesus was tested, he was tempted, misunderstood, rejected, betrayed, punished, hurt, broken, abandoned, crucified. Don't you see?

Our faith is not just in Easter, in a risen Savior disconnected from our lives, our joys, but also our most painful moments!

No, **\*we believe in Christ, crucified and risen!**

In crucified and risen Savior, there is hope for us, even on our worst days, for because we can know that, just like for Jesus, they are not the end!

Hebrews 12:2 says, *“Therefore, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and was raised to sit down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*<sup>6</sup>

**And the Good News is that he lived, suffered, was crucified, and died and rose in triumph for me and for you!**

Pray with me.

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<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 12:2, paraphrased from the New International Version (NIV) Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.