



Calvary Presbyterian Church  
Sunday, April 2, 2023

PALM SUNDAY: *"Reign on Our Parade"*  
Pastor Eyde Mabanglo

SCRIPTURE

**Luke 19:28-40 (New Living Translation)**

**Jesus' Triumphant Entry**

<sup>28</sup>After telling this story, Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of his disciples. <sup>29</sup>As he came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead. <sup>30</sup>"Go into that village over there," he told them. "As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup>If anyone asks, 'Why are you untying that colt?' just say, 'The Lord needs it.'"

<sup>32</sup>So they went and found the colt, just as Jesus had said. <sup>33</sup>And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked them, "Why are you untying that colt?"

<sup>34</sup>And the disciples simply replied, "The Lord needs it." <sup>35</sup>So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on.

<sup>36</sup>As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. <sup>37</sup>When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.

<sup>38</sup>"Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!"

<sup>39</sup>But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!"

<sup>40</sup>He replied, "If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!"

On ASH WEDNESDAY 2001, the Nisqually earthquake occurred about late morning on February 28. It had a magnitude of 6.8.

I didn't know that most accidents during a quake happen when people are moving from inside to outside structures...but I scooped up my 4- and 6-year-old and carried them outside to the cul-de-sac and watched our house shake. The chandeliers in the windows swung back and forth, and the two cars in the driveway did a strange tango in the pattern of a figure eight. And as you know, a dance in a figure eight, seems like eternity. Heh.

The kids asked if they could go back into the house.

I said...

"We can go back into the house when things stop shaking..."

## LIFE IS SHAKY

Quakes yesterday...Southern Idaho and off the northwest end of Vancouver Island. When I looked at the earthquake map last night, you can see that earthquakes are happening all the time...all over the earth.

And other areas of shakiness:

Our volatile political climate, civic unrest and more and more gun violence, global pandemic, and epidemic drug addictions, broken families, racism, ageism, elitism, sexism, systemic hate - the fabric of our society, the fabric of our souls being torn - like threads breaking between weak seams, like tectonic plates shifting along the fault lines within the earth, within our relationships, within our hearts and minds...profound disappointment, the betrayal of a friend, a broken promise, a breach of trust.

And then there is our own shakiness. Your preacher is shaky.

Yesterday was the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my mother's passing.

April Fools Day for some, a day of remembrance for me.

ALL I KNOW IS: Things are shaking - all around us -

'WE CAN GO BACK INTO THE HOUSE WHEN THINGS STOP SHAKING...'

But life is shaky.

And this time is shaky.

The third week in April...what's up with that?

My son was born on April 19, 1995 - at the precise moment of the Oklahoma Bombing - This time in April, we remember: The Boston Marathon Explosion, Columbine Shooting, Waco Raid, Virginia Tech Shooting...

Is Holy Week some sort of spiritual fault line? There seems to be a cosmic rift between the promise of spring, tulips, Easter, and new life AND the reality of evil in our midst, dark calamities that have shattered our false securities as a nation and a world.

... we are being challenged to pay attention on a much deeper level to the Spirit's moving in our midst every spring. This is the message of our scripture passage and the message of Holy Week. **GOD IS AWAKE IN THE QUAKES!**

The Richter Scale measures the activity of shaking earth, but it seems that we as earth dwellers also sense seismic activity within ourselves. I think Holy Week asks us to not ignore the moving of God's spirit in our stories, in our lives, and in our understanding of who God is and what the Spirit is doing...don't we have a Richter Scale within us that pays attention to this seismic activity in our souls?

Luke 19:28-40, Luke describes this scene (with a donkey and a road paved in people's garments). It is a protest parade if you will. In other words, Jesus is deliberately shaking things up in order to help Jerusalem see power and authority differently.

I think Jesus is trying to be a change agent, and change agents know that you need to disorganize in order to organize. This requires a shaking up...You might say that Jesus is challenging the illusion of power and might and rule by setting the scene by himself. He is riding a donkey (not a war horse) in a small protest march (not a victory parade), Jesus is trying to disillusion Jerusalem and prepare them to embrace God's power and might which manifests through servant leadership and suffering love.

## SIDEBAR--SQUARE PEG AND the ROUND HOLE

Palm Sunday seems to be the culmination of a square peg, round hole story...

On one side of town, the Jewish people are celebrating the Passover - the most epic story of deliverance in the history of the nation of God. They proclaim the promises of God, including the prophetic hope in a Messiah who will come and conquer the world. They are waiting for this King, from the lineage of David - to come with fanfare and might and glory...

In other words, they believe they know what they need. They want to experience the feeling of 'winning'. They need a savior, a king. They need to be delivered again. It is a round hole, but Jesus' style of leadership is a square peg...for their round hole.

BUT, on the other end of town, a small band of disciples create a new scene. Jesus is placed on a donkey. They cover the ground with clothing and palm branches - they are doing a budget film version of what they've all been longing for...for hundreds of years. They also want to experience the feeling of 'winning'. They sing HOSANNA! They acknowledge to some degree that JESUS is the answer. He is the round peg...their savior...to fit into their expectations of the coming Messiah...

But the seismic activity surrounding Palm Sunday is a seismic reckoning of the people's need for redemption and God's seismic activity to restore all of creation once and for all. As when a square peg is forced into a round hole, there is a great deal of tearing, splintering, and destruction. God will eventually shatter the expectations of God's people - this was the scene of Palm Sunday and it is still the scene many times over today.

*Like the prophets of old whose words shook things up and declared that the Lord shakes the mountains and melts the rocks, Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, shakes the world by his presence. No wonder they called him a prophet because what was happening was the very "shaking of the foundations" (Paul Tillich) of the world, as they knew it.*

*This shaking was not by military might and all the trappings of war but by an unarmed God only enfleshed with love. This love disarms because it's nonviolent and the most powerful force in the universe. The greatest of these is love because God is love so when Jesus processes into Jerusalem on donkey business, his love enters their world. His love meets hate. His nonviolence meets violence. And this will shake anyone and anything up.*  
SOURCE: Rev. Dr. Luke A. Powery, Duke University Chapel Sermon

The small crowd followed Jesus; they participated in this protest march without fully understanding what was happening. This is true today as well; We are not sure how to best articulate who Jesus is - even the many today who sing Hosanna in our many churches - but, like in today's story... some will follow, some will attend to him, and some will love Jesus to the very end.

We participate even though we don't understand everything that is going on.

He wants them to know truth beyond their expectations.

Jerusalem (and perhaps many of us) have constructed God. A version of Jesus that falls short of his amazing grace and suffering love. Of course, God wants to disrupt that. Of course, God wants to disrupt that in each and every one of us.

SIMPLY PUT! The message of Palm Sunday is that:  
*God will not meet our expectations.*  
*God will meet our needs.*

## SEISMIC ACTIVITY

Details in Matthew's telling of the Triumphal Entry in Matthew, Chapter 21:  
*Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" <sup>10</sup>And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."*

The people are stirred up/moved...this means their world is rocked!

Matthew says in verse 10 and 11 "seismic" - It is the Greek word where we get the name Poseidon - God of water and earthquakes

Translators can't quite agree on the meaning or magnitude...

NLV is *troubled*

NIV is *stirred up*

KJV is *moved*

NLT is *uproar*

MSG is *shaken*

...so is it "SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED"?! Heh. **GOD IS AWAKE IN THE QUAKES!**

Are you mindful of the Richter scale in our souls?

Our hearts are shaky...oscillating, seismic activity that is emotional not physical.

We sing shaky hosannas...broken hallelujahs...and I think broken hallelujahs are most appropriate during Lent.

We are being challenged to submit to the seismic activity of Holy Week

**SEISMIC MOVING OF GOD**

Let us not skip past the seismic activity this week.

The Spirit invites us to be mindful and to pay attention.

The mood of Holy Week: Reverence, humility, watchfulness for God moving, acting, with a different kind of MIGHT.

And the rest of the story of Lent and Holy Week:

Per Matthew/Chapter 27:51 In a Seismic Context...

Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. <sup>51</sup>At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup>The tombs also were opened...

Per Matthew/Chapter 28:4 in a Seismic Context...

28After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

...One of the ways we can be mindful through Holy Week is by laying down our cloaks, our selves...our MIGHT, our shaky expectations...our shaky doubts. Throw down your cloak, your palms, and watch the Seismic Power of God's love this week.

When will it be safe to go back...back into our comfort, back into our normal? When will the chandeliers stop swaying? When will the ground I stand on stop shaking and rolling?

Life will always be shaky...Indeed, spiritual lives are shaky.

**GOD IS AWAKE IN THE QUAKES!**

And our fully understanding the mind of God will always be tumultuous.

BUT there is some peace knowing that...

God's spirit is always moving...always loving, always restoring,

Be mindful of that this week.

Sit with Jesus in the garden as he prays and listen for the Spirit's movement.

Tune your heart to God's this week, let the Richter scale deep within you sense the Spirit's power and might.

In response to God's Amazing Grace and Suffering Love

Our hearts should always stir...our minds quake...our souls shake.

*Sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble...*

May it be so. May it be so.

