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Open Prairie United Church of Christ  
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“Becoming a Blessing”  
LUKE 19:28-40

It may be Palm Sunday, but in Luke’s account of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem there are no palms or hosannas. This is a paired down version of Jesus’ journey to the Mount of Olives. The fanfare is lacking, what we see instead is kind of simple and sweet.

Jesus sends two of his trusted friends to bring him a donkey- they bring it to Jesus, throw their cloaks over the colt and help Jesus up. As he rides along the dusty path, people keep spreading their cloaks out on the road. They are not waving palms per say, they are laying down their coats as if to make his ride easier, and the disciples are singing a simple song. A song of encouragement like we often do here at Open Prairie. A song of support, we know how good that feels that’s why we sing together all the time. It creates a bond between us. And out of that deep well of blessing, out of the love they have for each other scripture tells us, “the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen.” They offer him their blessing.

The sermon title this morning is “Becoming a blessing.” The other day I asked our young people what a blessing was and one of them said, “it is something you do to someone else”. The disciples offer Jesus their blessings.

From what we can tell, they didn't know what was about to happen; in hindsight it seems kind of impossible because Jesus had been warning them for some time now. He kept saying six ways to Sunday, "If you really live a life of authenticity and justice, there're going to be people who see you as a menace to society. They may hate you- they may even kill you. Evil is a real and present danger here and you need to know that going in. There's gonna come a time," he tells them, "when you'll have to stand up for and with each other and I'm not always going to be here to show you how. So it's great you're doing all this for me, but your going to have to become a blessing to each other."

Ironically, it's not the disciples who get- it's the Pharisees who seem to have a realistic grasp on the trouble headed down the pike. Scripture says "Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.'" Tell them to cut it out while they're ahead...you wanna get yourself and the rest of us killed? And Jesus answers, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

Even the stones would shout out-what does he mean by that? First he means he's not going to tell the disciple to stop- in fact his ministry is about teaching us how to be the stones that cry out on behalf of each other. Furthermore, what Jesus is saying is that God's blessings can't be controlled, owned, or predicted. No matter how bad it gets grace happens, goodness is stronger than evil and the light will shine through even the tiniest crack-in fact, the tinier the crack the more profound the presence of light.

I don't know about you, but I get hung up on this concept of evil. It's likely I have a hard time with it because it is used to dehumanize people and I have a hard time with any concept that renders a whole body of people worthless. But when it comes to Palm Sunday we kinda can't avoid this impending sense of doom, the feeling that evil looms large on the horizon.

I was once taught that early Christian mystics believed whenever good/God was trying to break through in a profound or new way...the "evil spirits" would fight tooth and nail to get the upper hand. I have to admit sometimes it does feel that way. You know the phrase "It's always darkest just before the dawn?" That's Palm Sunday in a nutshell. As we move into Holy Week it is a very true and present danger that the powers that seek to divide and distract us from the freedom we know in God's love- stand a very good chance of winning. I think there is something cyclical about it all. You know when you are at the tail end of a job, or a marriage or a semester that just won't end quick enough and then just when you think it can't get any worse, it does. That's when our only hope is to become a blessing to each other, right- a word of encouragement, a song of hope, a stone crying out on another's behalf.

We are here to remind each other that the light is breaking through. The power of good/God is doing a new thing...hold on Jesus says- even the stones are equipped to proclaim the truth of righteousness. In the end the awareness of pain, our own pain, the world's pain, is an invitation to be on the lookout for the new thing God is doing.

Friends Resurrection is on the horizon, and it doesn't mean that everyday death and destruction are gone for good, it means that God's light can shine through even the tiniest crack.

If you can believe anything believe this, we are a part of the new thing our good God is doing. As Adam Webber's (OPUCC's accompanist and resident song writer) song about the Jesus so aptly puts it, "We can be the light, we can be the light, come on and be the light."

Amen