

They cried Hosanna

-John 11:1-62



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For many of us it's been a while since we let our hearts rejoice in a completely wild, uninhibited way. Many of us have experienced deep joy and happiness in our lives, but we've often tempered it, worried that tomorrow might bring pain, or pain for someone we love, or that there's a flip side to joy, while we live here on earth. And that's true.

In chapter 12 of John, though, Jesus went into Jerusalem for the Passover festival. And there was a great crowd... and they went wild! "The crowd took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the king of Israel!'" [John 12:13]

In that moment apparently, there was so much shouting, and praise, and dozens of cloaks and branches being laid out on the ground, one after another, thrown down... until the whole place must have looked like a carpet. In that moment, the crowd knew and acknowledged who Jesus was – the Messiah, the Saviour, the One who was to come, God himself, who had performed incredible miracles... and it was time to sing and shout, wildly! The King had come!

In fact there was so much shouting that in Luke's Gospel, there's a record of complaint. "Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.'" [Luke 19:39]

But Jesus answer is astounding, "I tell you,' he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.'" [Luke 19:40]

I've never heard stones cry out, and I wonder what they

would sound like, if they did. But it's probably not the point. Somehow, the whole creation knew who Jesus was, and because of who he was, praise was essential, and unavoidable. It was time to shout and sing!

It reminds me that even today, the creation knows who Jesus is, and waits for the day when every single knee will bow before him... and praise him forever. In that day, according to Revelation, the praise will be wild and uninhibited. There will be no more tempering of praise and joy, ever, because sorrow will be done away with forever, and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, ever [Rev 21:4].

The reason we know this is because we know what happened next in the story. Jesus didn't ride into Jerusalem on a grand horse, with a kingly entourage, to fight the existing human regimes. He rode in on a donkey, and very soon, he would be nailed to a cross, to die for you and for me, so that we could find forgiveness, so that we could be relieved of all our shame, so that we could have hope, and joy, forever.

And for that reason, we sing a heartfelt song of praise to God, today, wherever we are in the world, and whoever we are in the world – whether we're lining up, waiting for fistula surgery in Surkhet, Nepal, or whether we're studying for exams at school in Pokhara, or whether we're negotiating visas with the ministry of health in Kathmandu... wherever we are, we praise God, in a beautiful, essential unavoidable way.