

## **SERMON: “Q&A/Jesus: “What else does Christ’s death redeem?”**

Rev. Geoff Ross: Sunday, April 14, 2019, Palm Sunday – St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church

*[Q&A:Insert. This week/Q: What else does Christ’s death redeem? Answer/Insert: “Christ’s death is the beginning of the redemption and renewal of every part of fallen creation, as he powerfully directs all things for his own glory and creation’s good.” Perfect Q for PS – resolves an often-overlooked statement from Jesus: Told by a Pharisee; “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”]*

Traditionally, Palm Sunday draws from all the Gospels to record the events that make up the final days of Jesus’ life. The Gospel of John contributes the Palm branches, Matthew adds the Zechariah 9:9 prophecy, and Mark – with Matthew and John – provides descriptions of the singing/shouting crowds. Uniquely, in the Gospel of Luke the account hints to something yet to come. As we heard it, Luke’s version of the ‘parade’ offers up one significant difference: while the disciples/crowds, with their Palm branches, are expressing an ultimate truth it’s clear that they don’t fully/truly understand Jesus or the nature of His Messiahship; but the stones do – and Jesus tells us; the stones would sing it aloud if the disciples were silenced.

*[Body/World=holistic bodies – connected/sympathetic: one part suffers/whole suffers. Sin – our sin – has stained the world/is suffering because of us! Fallen/taking world – creation – with us. Not the world of Grandparents-or our youth:It/we need to be saved.]*

On Dec 22/1968 Apollo 8/astronauts – 1<sup>st</sup> mission to circumnavigate/moon – took a photograph – by chance – of the earth that changed our understanding of the world. [Earth:small/blue marble/in a pitch-black universe] In an instant we went from thinking of the world was big/large/invincible to seeing that it was vulnerable/fragile/small. “*Earth-rise*” transcended all our earthly/manmade division and moved us to think about the planet we call “home.” Within years the modern environmental movement was born as we – globally – went from thinking about ourselves as individuals and our neighbours as those strange people over there, to seeing them for who they truly were – co-“*riders on the earth together*,” [USpoet:Archibald MacLeish] our brothers/sisters – along with creation, all created equal before God.

*[Genesis/how God created the world/everything in it/7days – 3000+ years ago; not science/poetry:Hebrew poetry – Priestly writers/explain God’s creative power. Poetic language/creation myth – Theo-centric/(God-focused) interpretation of the world/God’s role in creation: got it right! John:Christ – the Word in the World when the world first whirled and the “spellbound horses walking warm/Out of the whinnying green stable/On to the fields of praise.” – Got it right!]*

In our scripture reading Paul lifts our minds/eyes from the spectacle of the parade that marks the beginning of Holy Week to the God’s view of what is happening behind the veil of this world: more poetry to tell us that the Gospel is bigger than we think. To Paul the Gospel was profoundly personal; Jesus came to be with us/live-die as one of us/save-

redeem us/despite us. But Paul also knew that the Gospel isn't about us; it was/is always about the whole of creation – a creation that was/is also captive/“*subjected*” to “*futility*”/sin as a result of Adam's fall and it, too, awaits being “*set free from its bondage to decay*” by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam/Jesus.(Rom 8:18-25)

In this later creed of the Church's understanding of the nature of Jesus, Paul uses Jesus' own claim to Isaiah's Messiah prophecy that God would make all things new by redeeming/re-creating the whole of creation in/through His “*servant*”/Jesus.(Isaiah 43:18-19/Rev 21:5) By describing Jesus' role in creation and how all things in heaven/earth, seen/unseen, rulers/authorities were created by Him – for Him, Paul proclaims that Jesus “*was before all else, and by Him everything is held together.*” He then says that it is Jesus' willingness to take on the form of the suffering servant – to become one of us/take on our nature – that unites not only Him to us but Him to His creation “*by sacrificing his blood on the Cross so that all beings in heaven and on earth would be brought back to God.*” By doing this, Paul reminds us of an easily forgotten reality: God's plan/promise in Jesus was to re-create all of creation, renewing us in/within a new cosmos/Eden – new heaven/earth.

*[Jazz Hymn;Armstrong:Wonderful World/“I see skies of blue and clouds of white/The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night/And I think to myself what a wonderful world. The colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky/Are also on the faces of people going by/I see friends shaking hands saying how do you do/They're really saying I love you.” Nature/restores-New H/E:no pain/death/sorrow.]*

Friends, this promise is for us – it's as personal as our very salvation, but is as vast as the universe: it's that grace will truly perfect all of nature/that the same God who created all of creation through His Word will, through the work of His incarnate Word, bring about a new creation. Seen this way, Jesus didn't just come as Emmanuel to be-with us – to unite us to Him, He came as Co-Creator to take back His creation.

So, as we begin Holy Week – as we begin to grasp the great hope of the Gospel that encompasses both our individual transformation AND universal redemption in/through Jesus Christ, let us, like the stones – and the whole of creation – shout out to the glory of God! Amen.