



**Sunday, April 5th**

**Preacher: Pastor Howard-John Wesley**

**Sermon Title: A Round of Applause**

**Scripture: Luke 19:28-40**

*After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'" Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They replied, "The Lord needs it." They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."*

**Sermon Summary:**

Pastor Wesley taught a powerful lesson about our addictions to approval and affirmation. He reminded us that "the affirmation of people can never acknowledge the call of God." As Jesus was entering Jerusalem a large crowd applauded him, but this crowd was not consistent in their support of Jesus' ministry and they had their own selfish reasons for cheering him on. We have to be careful when we consider our own sources of applause and approval. This is especially important when we consider social media which leads to:

- 1) Chasing Celebrity
- 2) Continual Comparison

Our task is to not trade the taste of human approval for the calling God has on our lives. We must walk faithfully in our assignment and just like the crowd we must remember to celebrate what we've already seen God do. If we don't praise Him the rocks will cry out.

### **Life Application Questions.**

1. In what ways have you been able to show the love of God to others during this time? In what ways have you been able to receive it?
2. Who is your crowd? Pastor cautioned us about seeking the applause and approval of people. Who are the people whose applause matters most to you and how has that impacted your spiritual life?
3. Pastor Wesley pointed out that in Matthew, Mark, and John, the crowd is crying out for what they want. What are you crying out for in this moment? How can you keep these requests from outshining or diminishing your praise?
4. We were cautioned in the sermon not to compare our lives to the “filtered” images of others. In contrast, what filters have you put on for others to see? How have you made yourself appear more successful, desirable, or righteous and how might that impact those who are watching you?
5. Crowd Control: While we are practicing physical social distancing, there may be other kinds of social distancing we can do. Journal two columns. Title one column “help” and the other column “hinder.” Think through individuals or crowds closest to you right now, and place them in either column according to those that help your spiritual growth and those that hinder it. Take note of what social distancing God might be calling you to with those in your “hinder” column.

### **Spirit Work:**

1. Take time to reflect on how people pleasing has been harmful, a waste of time, or not served the purposes of God in your life. How can you use these lessons to grow your faith and develop a more personal, intimate, and vital relationship with God? What scriptures and examples (mentors, Biblical figures) and friends can help you mature in this area?
2. Lean in to lean on. As in Pastor Wesley's example of seeing something new in the Marvel films they'd seen before, take some time with the Holy Spirit's guiding to lean in to a 'But God' moment in your past. Lean in and see it again. What new revelation do you see that you can lean on in this new season?
3. How has comparison shown up for you in this season of your life? Who have you been comparing yourself to? What could you start doing to affirm who you are right now? Seek is over but maybe letting go of a social media account, a way of thinking or even toxic conversations could be a way forward. Find a scripture or inspiring quote that can encourage you the next time you find yourself comparing.