

If We Don't Praise His Name  
Luke 19:35-40

There is a descriptive word that is often used in secular conversation that I've found to be helpful as I try to comprehend some of the ways of the world around me. The word is "hyperbole", with "hyperbole" being defined as "an exaggerated statement or claim not meant to be taken literally", many people using hyperbole when they try to explain something beyond their normal understanding.

However, and unfortunately so, I have heard some preachers and bible teachers use that same expression when they would attempt to explain some of the unusual things that the Lord Jesus said within these words of scripture.

Perhaps yes, it might at times seem as if Jesus is using "hyperbole" in some of His explanations. But may I quickly say that I am personally very uncomfortable saying such things about the Lord Jesus and about His words to us.

Folks, in this Man Jesus, we have the very Omnipotent God of all creation, our All-Powerful, All-Wise and All-knowing God. And in my meager understanding of who God is, I really can't think of a reason why He would ever need to exaggerate. He can simply say it, and it "Is".

Why are these thoughts coming to my mind at this moment? It's because of some of these words that our Lord has used here in this scripture passage that we'll study today, here given in Luke chapter 19. Let's pause and listen to these words and then let's talk about them. Verse 35,

<sup>35</sup> And they (the disciples) brought the donkey colt to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> And as he rode along, the people spread their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup> As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" <sup>39</sup> And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." <sup>40</sup> He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." (Luke 19:35-40)

I confess to you that I delight when our Lord requires our otherwise “rational minds” to go beyond the ordinary manner of thinking that we are comfortable with. Because as long as we are able to reduce all of the matters involving God down to a human level of thinking, especially those matters involving “faith”, then we can imagine answers and solutions that are comfortable to us.

Thankfully, God does not desire for us to remain forever within the “comfort zone” of rational thinking. He wants you and me to reach on beyond ourselves and into the irrational possibilities that exist within Him and within His kingdom.

And here, in His words about the stones “crying out and praising His Name”, Jesus gives you and me another opportunity to do exactly that, to go beyond our natural ability to rationalize and to take a brief look into that other world, that unseen “kingdom world” that flows all about us each day, a world where we, as believers, are invited to come and fellowship with Him.

In His response to these Pharisees, Jesus interjected a mystical thought, a thought that violates the usual rules of the natural world.

<sup>40</sup> He said, “I tell you, if these (His disciples) were silent, the very stones would cry out.” (Luke 19:40)

Here, Jesus told the Pharisees that if men and women kept silent, for one reason or another, then the lifeless stones on the ground would rise up and begin to “Praise” His Name.

But the rational minds of the Pharisees could not identify with or accept such possibilities as that. For them to think that such things might actually take place was absurdly foolish.

And may I say also that, even now, there are many devoutly believing Christians, even many bible scholars, who would have the same response, who seem to “flinch” at the thought of such mystical possibilities.

Which presents the question to you and to me . . . what do we believe about these words of our Lord? When we hear our bible teachers and preachers refer to these words as being “hyperbole”, saying that God does not really intend for us to think that the stones might “actually” take on a heart of praise and a voice of adoration and begin to utter forth sounds and words of praise and worship to Christ . . . What are the thoughts that come to our minds?

Also, in other efforts to explain away such expressions as these, I've heard some bible teachers insist that this is simply the way that the writers of these scriptures, in this case, Luke, chose to get a convincing point across to the readers.

But here again, for myself, I would use great restraint in saying such things about these precious words of scripture. I truly believe the words of 2 Timothy 3 that I quote for us often, where we are told that,

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

May I confess my own convictions regarding these words that we are studying here today? I personally have no doubt that these words are real, and that they mean exactly what they say. And although Luke, or John, or Isaiah or some of the other writers of scripture were probably at times tempted to exaggerate or use "hyperbole" about God, I'm confident that the Holy Spirit restrained their minds and hands, and only the "breathed out words of God" got recorded in this bible.

A moment ago, I use the word "flinch". That's because it is a word that the people of the natural world will understand. When there is a "standoff" between two competitors, and as the tension rises to an ultimate pitch, usually one of the competitors will finally "flinch". And that is when the other competitor knows that He has won.

And that kind of "standoff" is exactly what Jesus is speaking about here in these words. Men and women of faith are called upon to exercise their faith on beyond their natural and rational abilities to reason and to think.

So, may I ask you, do you believe that this bible writer, Luke, flinched? Did he choose the more comfortable human rationale and perspective and give us "hyperbole"?

And what about you and me, right at this moment! As we consider these words of Jesus, does our rational mind also "flinch", and do we try to explain away these words as being only a "metaphor" or an "analogy", "hyperbole". Or will we instead, be "spiritually brave", and will we stand firm in our belief that our God is not confined to the simple limits that our human mind can rationalize?

But one might ask, “Why is it so important for us to take ourselves through this “exercise of belief”?” It is important because if we are going to move on forward in our faith and believe all that Jesus has done for us on the cross, we must first believe and accept who He is. Simply put, Jesus was able to do the things that He did because He was who He was. He was, and is, Almighty God, the one who with only the words of His mouth, spoke and created all things out of nothing.

If we will first believe “who Jesus is”, then it is no real “stretch” to believe what He can do, that He can give a command and the stones will rise up and praise His Name.

And while we are considering “irrational” possibilities such as this, may I also call to our mind one of my most favorite “seemingly absurd” statements that was made by God, one that we find in the Book of Isaiah, chapter 55? There, God speaks about the mountains and the hills breaking forth into singing, and the trees of the fields clapping their hands”. Listen!

<sup>12</sup> “For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. (Isaiah 55:12)

Oh dear Christians, can mountains and hills sing, and do trees have hands that they can clap? Did God not make mountains and hills without mouths, and trees without hands? Do our learned bible scholars also try to explain these words away as being simple “hyperbole”?

Oh fellow believers, the challenge that our God has placed before you and me in all of the many “irrational considerations” is simply this, “Is not our God able to do all things? And will He not ultimately bring all things into conformity with His will and His purposes, and bring glory to His Name?”

“Cannot the God who created those mountains without voices and the trees without hands, simply speak and by the power of His voice re-shape them in any way He chooses, giving the mountains and hills voices and songs, and the trees of the fields hands to clap in praise of Him?”

The answer is, “Yes”, an emphatic “Yes”! Our God certainly can do that. He is in no way limited to the boundaries of our human rationale.

And may I say even that all such things are quite an easy task for Him! All that our God had to do in the beginning was to imagine the heavens and the earth, and all the people and things that reside within them, and then simply “speak”. And all those things that He imagined, came out of nothingness into actual existence, the stars, our sun, our moon, our earth, our seas, our mountains, our fields, and all the forms of life that would call earth its home, even mankind, you and me.

So then, looking back for a moment at our scripture passage for today, knowing that our God can do all things, wouldn't it be a very simple thing for God to reshape the stones on the ground and make them able to open their mouths and praise His Name.

It seems that the real challenge that is being presented to us here in these words is not whether or not God can do what He does, and make stones to cry out praise to Him. But rather, the question is, “Will men, those men, those townspeople, and even the Pharisees, be willing to do what they are supposed to do?”

“Will they obey the “Spiritual unction” taking place within their souls that demands that they open their mouths and utter forth words of praise and worship to this great and mighty and honorable King of all the earth, as He humbly rides along on His lowly donkey?”

As I have thought about this question and about these men and women, and yes, even about you and me, the question is really not about whether or not we will praise His Name. Ultimately, without doubt and without exception every knee will someday bow and every mouth will confess that Jesus is Lord to the Glory of God. Listen to those words of truth given to us in Philippians chapter 2, verse 9,

<sup>9</sup> . . . God has highly exalted him (the Lord Jesus) and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

As we consider these precious words within the context of the passage we are studying today, it brings to mind a difficult truth that is revealed within these

words, a very difficult side to the praise of God that we need to understand and accept.

And that truth is that even "sin" itself, though it be so wrong and so hurtful to God, will ultimately redound to the praise and worship of Him.

Sin and all of the awful and wretched results that come forth from sinful conduct are ultimately a form of praise and worship to the holiness of God. By that I mean that through man's sinful conduct, God's holiness and purity and righteousness are magnified.

It might seem too simple a thing to say that for us to know how good one thing is, we must first see how awful and wretched some other thing is, but it is true. All such things stand as a "witness" to us, whether they be good or they be evil.

As we look around us at the wretched nature of those who abide in sin, and then we contrast that wretchedness to the pleasant pastures of people who seek the righteousness of God, the difference is clear.

But again, both do redound to the praise and the glory of God, each in its own way, one speaking forth praises to God by the godliness that is being shown, the other speaking forth praises to God by the obvious ungodliness that is taking place.

And even judgment itself will be a praise and worship to God, showing forth His holiness and His righteousness . . . His grace and His mercy being shown to the faithful, and then His Justice being shown as He holds sinners to account and sends them into eternal hell.

And all of those things, in their own way declare praise and honor and worship to God.

So then, Yes! Yes! Every mouth will praise Him, for who He is and for all that He has done!

But also dear Christian, not only every mouth will praise His Name, everything, by its very existence will be a praise and a worship to His Name. Those words in Psalm 19.

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. <sup>2</sup> Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup> Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4)

In these words, we find that the whole universe speaks forth praise to the glory and honor and majesty and power of our God, for all that He is and all that He has done.

He created all of it perfectly, and His intention was for all of it to bring Him glory as it blesses you and me and makes provision for us. And He is honored and praised simply by its perfection and its provision.

And His intention is that as we look at Him and all that He has done, our voices will join in with the voice of the universe, and cry out in unison, "My Lord and my God, How Great Thou Art! How Great Thou Art!"

And folks, I really want to do that! Because God's provision in all that He has created and all that He continues to do each day is not only seen in the vastness of the universe. It is also up close and personal to each one of us.

As I look at my dear family, and as I feel the adoration that I have within my heart for them, I want to turn and praise God for them. They truly are perfect gifts. And I know that every good and perfect gift comes down from God. He gave me my sweet companion wife. He gave me my wonderful children and grandchildren. They are perfect in every way and my voice should never stop praising and thanking God who created them.

So, then yes, everyone and everything will ultimately praise God. And may we say again why praise must take place? We must praise Him because of who He is! He is the Almighty God, our Almighty God. And He is worthy to receive praise and honor and glory and majesty and power! He is worthy to be praised.

But returning to our scripture text for a moment, we are here given the exact way that God would prefer that such praise and honor always take place . . . that we would see all of the wonderful and loving and precious provisions Christ has made for us, beginning with His atoning sacrifice for our wretched sins, and then on and on, into all the many blessings that we experience as we abide in

His righteousness. And then from knowing and experiencing all of those blessings, our hearts would have a continual, unstoppable outpouring of praise to Him.

This is God's desire for you and for me! He is a loving Father who sent His only Begotten Son to suffer and to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our personal sins. Do we not owe back to Him all of the praise and worship and honor that the unction of the Holy Spirit can muster up from within us. We dare not hold our mouths closed! We dare not be found guilty of requiring God to raise up the rocks and stones to praise Him. May it never be!

With humble hearts, you and I must lift up our voices in praise and worship of Christ. Those words in Philippians chapter 2 again,

<sup>9</sup> . . . God . . . has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

Before we close, may I remind us of a very important promise that God has made to us. In the Psalms, God promises that He will "inhabit the praises of His people", that as we lift up praise and adoration of Him and to Him, He will personally come and abide in fullness within us and within our praises!

Now isn't that a wonderful thought and promise? Yes, it is a mystical thought, but it is so very, very true. I know because as I stop and lift up praise to the Lord Jesus, something very mystical takes place within my soul, bringing me joy unspeakable.

May I encourage and exhort us to do that right now . . . and to do it often. Stop all that you are doing, lift up holy hands and praise the Lord Jesus,

What words can we use? The words of Psalm 150 are an excellent place to start . . .

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! <sup>2</sup> Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! (Psalm 150:1-2)



And then, let's praise Him for saving our own soul, and for saving the souls of our beloved family members. Then let's praise Him for all of His wonderful provision of love. Then let's praise Him for the provision of a place to live, and the food that we eat.

Oh dear Christian, God truly is worthy to be Praised! As those final words of Psalm 150 refrain . . .

<sup>6</sup>Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! (Psalm 150:6)

Pray with me.