

Read also Psalm 2. Check out the service at www.fpcd.org.

Dub told the story of the triumphal entry, a wonderful story for Jesus, about great followers, but also underlying resistance. Did you notice it?

Jesus had many followers, but at the same time, many resisters. You might not have this in your family, but many families experience underlying conflict or disagreement at times.

For example, go shop for a new car. If your family consists of more than one person, you will likely have an argument over what kind of car to buy.

Or, perhaps you disagree over the color of the walls or type of furniture. Men, mostly the woman should get her way. ☺

Sometimes family members don't like the same foods, which causes a clash when you try to decide where to go to lunch after church. Or, you might have that family member who says "I don't know, you decide." Then say, "Let's go here," and they say, "Naaa, I'm not in the mood for that." Division can be so frustrating!

Where to go on vacation, how to spend money, the list goes on. I bet you could add some things as well! Would you like to? And, depending on your style, it can be a general resistance or can lead to something much more serious.

The Psalmist notices the resistance.

Why do the nations rage against the Lord and against his anointed? (2:1)

I don't know if you have noticed, but there is a great deal of tug and pull in the public square; an underlying resistance between people. Have you noticed that in government or on TV, the internet, or the newspaper? The Psalmist says it often leads to war:

The kings of the earth prepare for battle. (2:2a)

Jesus comes into Jerusalem, the heartbeat of the Jewish religion—the Holy City. It's like Catholics going to Rome at Easter. It's Passover week. Everyone's excited about the celebration. You heard all the plans in Dub's story.¹ Hear the story:

So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on. As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. When they reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen. "Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!" (Lk 19:35-38)

Here's the pushback:

But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!" (v. 39)

¹see Luke 19:28-34.

But Jesus replied: (v. 40)

"If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!"

The Psalmist said:

The rulers plot together against the Lord and against his anointed one. (2:2b)

Once Jesus told a parable about an owner of a winery who leased it to tenants. At the time of harvest, he sent an employee (a servant in those days) to get his share of the produce but the tenants beat the employee and sent him away empty-handed. After sending three different employees with the same result, the owner finally said to himself, "I'll send my son. Perhaps they will respect him." But when they saw the son, the tenants plotted, "This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance may be ours." (Lk 20:9-19)

Sometimes we just absolutely do not comprehend such division. We wonder why? Why the division in our own city and in our own families? Jesus experienced division throughout his ministry. Many people loved him; many resisted him to the point of wanting to kill him.

You would think somebody doing such good as Jesus did would be loved by everyone. But that's not the case! Jesus even acknowledged it: family members would be divided over him. Fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, parents and children (see Lk 12:51-53). It's like the Psalm. Some say, *let's break their chains!*

You might understand this very well. You are pretty good people—you seek to do good, to be a blessing. Do you ever find that people resist you or criticize you or question your motives? Are you surprised? Dismayed? Want to quit?

Jesus didn't quit. Perhaps he understood Psalm 2:

But the one who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. Then in anger he rebukes them, terrifying them with his fierce fury. For the Lord declares, "I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem, on my holy mountain." (4-6)

So Jesus always pressed on. Whether it was the religious leaders who hated his healing people on the Sabbath, or people in his hometown who tried to drive him off a cliff, or leaders who said he cast out demons by the power of Satan, Jesus continued doing good, standing for God, following God's will.

How do you handle it when you are criticized or ridiculed for trying to do good? Do you hang in there, or do you want to run? Do you experience peace, or turmoil? I have to admit, it is hard!

Yet Jesus pressed on.

We long for nothing to come against us, hoping we may have peace. Peace may come another way.

There lived a man, a Christian, who was a Civil War general for the south. It was the battle of Gettysburg when General Robert E. Lee called for his troops to retreat. As they did so, an injured man from the Union who was laying on the ground near where he passed recognized him. The man writes, "I shouted out, 'Hurrah for the Union.' The General heard me, looked, stopped his horse, dismounted and came toward me. I must confess I at first thought he meant to kill me. But as he came up he looked down at me with such a sad expression upon his face that all fear left me, and I wondered what he was about. He extended his hand to me, grasping mine firmly, and looking right into my eyes, said: 'My son, I hope you will soon be well.' If I live to a thousand years I shall never forget the expression on General Lee's face. There he was defeated, retiring from a field that had cost him and his cause almost their last hope, and yet he stopped to say words like those to a wounded soldier of the opposition who had taunted him as he passed by! As soon as the General had left me, I cried myself to sleep there upon the bloody ground."²

What an impact it makes when you press on into your mission as a Christian to extend grace even to those who are sharply divided against you. So now, let's see the full extent of Jesus' response:

But as they came closer to Jerusalem and Jesus saw the city ahead, he began to weep. "How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not accept your opportunity for salvation." (19:41-44)

He's getting all this praise rising up around him. Like the roar of a crowd at the ball field when your team wins. Yet he stops at the high point, he looks out over Jerusalem, home of his people; and the tears well up and spill over onto his cheeks. Here's his attitude:

How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. (Instead) your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not accept your opportunity for salvation."

He's utterly grieved.

Once before he lamented over Jerusalem:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Lk 13:34)

So do you think there is no hope for them? Do you think only judgment comes? No, with God there's always hope.

In 1911, an opera singer was accused of fraud and thrown in jail. But even in light of that opposition he still sang. From his cell that night he sang the song that Matt sang, "The Holy City." The story goes: "Men who had been arrested for drunken and disorderly conduct were standing before the judge in that same jail that night. The men were said to have dropped to their knees as the singer began, 'Last night I lay a-sleeping there came a dream so fair', lyrics

²A. L. Long, *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee: His Military and Personal History*.

contrasting with their previous night's drunkenness. The song's conclusion resulted in the judge dismissing the men without punishment, each having learned a lesson from the song.”³ Jerusalem is God’s Holy City which will be restored.

Grasp the heart of Jesus. He weeps over his people. Do you weep over your city and your loved ones who might show resistance? Your steadiness even when people oppose you will make a great difference to your family, your city, and even the world.

When you meet opposition don’t give up. Follow Jesus’ way. Weep over those who resist you, weep over the division in your city and extend God’s hand of grace. You never know what changes your grace will bring.

AMEN

³The Holy City (song), from Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holy_City_%28song%29, accessed 4/9/14.