

Sermon (All-age): 2021/03/28 (Palm Sunday, Year B) - *Zechariah 9:9-10; Mark 11:1-11_BTR*

Let's play a game:

I'm going to play a series of short clips of audio, and I want you to guess who is being introduced.

Okay? (Kids, adults, *everyone*.)

Just throw up your hand as soon as you know whose *entrance* music is that you're hearing.

Let's start with an easy one -

No. 1 ['The 007 Theme' by Monty Norman - ans.: James Bond]

No. 2 ['The Imperial Theme' by John Williams - ans.: Darth Vader]

No. 3 ['Eye of the Tiger' by Survivor - ans.: "Rocky" Balboa.]

No. 4 ['The Wedding March' by Mendelssohn - ans.: a bride.]

No. 5 ['Zadok the Priest' by George Fredrik Händel - ans.: H.R.H Queen
Elizabeth II (or any British monarch since the coronation of
George II in October 1727).]

[Extras 'Ms. Hilton' by The Penfifteen Club - ans.: Paris Hilton; 'Iron Man' by
Black Sabbath - ans.: Ironman (Marvel Comics superhero).]

So, what am I "getting at" by playing these?

When I was fourteen - and at boarding school (in northern England) - a new boy joined my class...

from America.

His father was an executive with 'Caterpillar.'

Do you know them?

Yellow and black logo.

They make earth-moving equipment - *bulldozers*, that sort of thing.

And machines for demolition and excavation.

A *massive*, global company.

You see their heavy, noisy products everywhere.

Well, this boy was called "Andrew Stuff."

So, *obviously*, we re-named him, "Stuffy."

"Stuffy" and I became *good* friends.

I was fascinated by how he was different because of his background - Illinois, I think.

And one of the things about him that stood out to me - something that seemed *very* foreign - was his passion for 'WWF.'

Wrestling.

I'd never seen *anything* like it - and he had me watching it *all* the time - on "cable TV" at his house:

it was both laugh-out-loud funny *and* violent and athletic, frankly rather homoerotic and *ridiculous*.

And this was its "hey day," I guess:

Hulk Hogan, Randy "Macho Man" Savage, Steve "Stone Cold" Austin, etcetera.

Much about the phenomenon remained - *remains* - mysterious to me - such as how one could get so excited about bouts that were so clearly rehearsed and orchestrated beforehand, but *one* thing I did "pick up" on quickly was the importance of "Entrance Music."

- every wrestler or...personality had a tuneful theme which was played as they approached and entered the ring.

It "set the tone"; helped establish who they were - their *character*:

there were obvious good guys, and the crowd were cheer and clap.

And there were ominous "baddies" - *villains* - and they were booed and egged.

And so each fighter's personal soundtrack was really important in this respect - for creating the right kind of atmosphere; for preparing and informing the audience's response.

And this got me thinking..

you know, when Jesus entered Jerusalem for the climax of His ministry - that was *Him* "climbing into the ring."

To do battle.

Against the Devil and death.

And what we see - in our text - is that as He did that; as He approached the city, the crowds 'were' I quote, 'shouting, "Hosanna!..."'

Matthew remembers exactly the same thing: [21:9-10a].

So does *John*: [12:13].

Luke, on the other hand - interestingly, describes the incident *slightly* differently, he recalls the "crowds" '*prais[ing]* God joyfully': [19:37b].

Basically, as a (clever) man called Erhard Gerstenberger says, the cries of "Hosanna" by the well-wishers at Jerusalem's ? gate were '[a] repeated liturgical exclamation':[n.1]

One that almost certainly might have been uttered in a "*sing-song*" way.

What's my point? (Many of you have already guessed.)

The repeated refrain of "Hosanna, hosanna" was *Jesus' "entrance music;"*
His "personal soundtrack."

And it means something like "save us now."

Or "S. O. S."

And though the crowds couldn't anticipate; couldn't *imagine precisely* how Jesus was going to do that - many had the wrong idea, even - they knew something *big* was about to "go down."

Something that would change *everything*.

Let's pray that God would help us *feel* the excitement as the first men and women did.

And if this *isn't* your first Easter, let's pray that God would help us *remember* - each one of us - how we *first* felt - the relief; *the peace* - when we realized Jesus had gone to that ancient place to save *me*.

Amen?

Footnotes:

1. *Psalms - Part 2 and Lamentations* (2001), Grand Rapids, M.I.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 512.