

**LET THE STONES CRY OUT**  
**July 2, 2017 Morning Service**  
**Luke 19:37-40**

Well in 1972 it had been for years at my little high school in Alabama that the senior class took a trip and for 20, 25 years I guess they had always packed up in north Alabama and come to Panama City, Florida for a weekend trip. Our crazy class decided to do something different and we voted to go to Washington, D.C. So we saved all our money and many of us loaded up on those Trailway buses and took off to Washington and spent those three days there. It was my first time to see that reflecting pool and walk up to the Lincoln Memorial. That's what I remember more than anything I saw was looking up at that huge statue of Lincoln.

I was taken aback by the inscriptions engraved in granite everywhere of great quotes but I was amazed at the amount of scripture I found all around me. Fast forward to last year. Jon and I were invited to come to Washington where we led a worship service in the room underneath the rotunda and then in the House the next day I opened the House in prayer and we had a marvelous tour and saw things that we'd never seen. We were taken out on a private balcony to look down toward the Washington Monument in a marvelous setting.

Down below us they were getting ready for the inauguration. They didn't know of who because the election had not been yet and they were setting up the risers and getting ready for all they do with the inauguration. I got some calls from classmates back up in Alabama when those pictures were posted on Facebook and they asked me, "How in the world does a redneck from Alabama get to go pray at the opening of Congress?" I said, "Friend, it's just like going to heaven. It's who knows you. That's the whole deal right there." Our gracious member and friend and Congressman Jeff Miller had asked us to do that. Now coming behind him, Matt Gaetz, our friend from over in Fort Walton. Matt Gaetz was with us in worship. He sat here with us for church and then stuck around for the second service. I asked Dr. Lewis to let him slip out graciously.

We're grateful to God for those that serve us. As I thought about that this week, my mind rolled back to my first visit to Washington and I've been there on several occasions. I'll be there for a meeting again next spring. I began to think about our nation and being filled with symbols and imagery of our Christian heritage as a nation. Now America's not Israel and America's not God's chosen but we have a deep heritage. You just look around you when you visit Philadelphia and Washington and you find the word of God all over the place.

It came to my mind Luke's gospel chapter 19 when they had gotten that colt. He said, "Bring it so I can ride." They borrowed this colt and put Jesus on it and in Luke 19:37 the Bible says:

*As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" [It's like a bunch of Baptists got together.] Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"<sup>1</sup>*

Jesus was saying there, "If My followers won't give me praise I'll raise up rocks that will." It became mindful to me this week that it seems America has become quiet about our Christian heritage but I tell you, when you visit the capital and other places the stones cry out. Jesus and His name was honored here.

You know, when you visit the capital, it's amazing. The same court that says you can't post the Ten Commandments has got it in their own Supreme Court building over 40 times. It's amazing. In the freeze about the justices you find Moses with those tablets numbered one through ten. I read this week of someone, while on a tour, was told that those ten numbers on those tablets, when asked, "What is that?" they said, "Those are the first ten amendments to the Constitution." The person who was pretty sharp said, "Well did they write Hebrew when they wrote those?" On the great doors coming into the Supreme Court – they keep them open now so you can't see it but when they close the doors the Ten Commandments are on the back side of those doors.

In the lattice work that divides the argument of sides from those that are there in the lawyers' pool on the other side, the lattice work between those two is inscribed again and again and again with the Ten Commandments. You'll find it 40 plus times in the room of the Supreme Court. It's in the national archives floor you find the Ten Commandments. You go to the Library of Congress, you find the Ten Commandments. Speaking of the Library of Congress, when you go in there you'll find these scriptures engraved in the wall. John chapter 1 and verse 5 is there. The light shines in darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it. Right there in the Library of Congress. Proverbs 4:7, the beginning of wisdom is this. Acquire wisdom and with all your acquiring, get understanding. That's what the Library of Congress has.

You know, you're supposed to get smart when you go in a library. You go in the Library of Congress. Then that great text from the old prophet, Micah. Micah 6:8, chisel in stone: *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.*

The stones cry out when you walk in the capital of our land. There are many other sayings but I'm telling you, it is replete with scriptures over and over and over and over you find scripture and reference to the Christian heritage where this nation found its bedrock.

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

This morning I want to draw your attention from my message to one place. It's the highest 555 foot tall building. Fifty-five feet at its base, weighing 90,000 tons made out of 36,000 pieces of Marilyn granite and marble, the Washington Monument. If you visit the Washington Monument you will find it filled with inscriptions, things chiseled in that stone. There are more than three but I have just pulled out three scriptures that you'll find on the walls of this great monument that marks our nation's capital.

I want to show them to you this morning and think with you because I think these stones preach to us on this Fourth of July weekend. First of all, you find this inscription. Holiness to the Lord. Holy to the Lord. Holiness to the Lord. Where does it come from? Two verses. Exodus 28 and verse 36. *"You shall also make a plate of pure gold and shall engrave on it, like the engravings of a seal, 'Holy to the Lord.'"* It's on the turban of the High Priest. They were to set this gold plate and on that turban they would write, "Holy to the Lord," or "Holiness to the Lord." Out of the King James Version, that's what they used in the 1800s when they put those scriptures there. Holiness unto the Lord.

I would share with you the first thing that I believe the monument called Washington is screaming to us today is be holy, holy, holy, holy. I talked with one of our young college students this week and I was so encouraged. As I began to converse and ask about the things of God, this college student said, "Pastor, when I left the city of Pensacola and went off to school I really didn't get involved in a church." That's error number one. He said, "I got into the party scene and I just started drinking. I wasn't living for God but I came under sharp conviction that if I was going to be a Christ follower I had to – and I wrote it down." He said, "I must crown Jesus Christ King of my life and stop the partying and the life of the consumption of alcohol." I said, "Glory to God. Holy. Holiness to the Lord."

Dear friend, that's what God calls us to be. If we're His people like the High Priest and we are all priests before the Lord now. There is no High Priest anymore. You are a priest. I am a priest. We're under this new covenant but the picture of that priest with that golden place, holy. They expected the man of God going to the throne of God unto the face of God to be holy and if you're going to be the people of God going to the throne of God unto the place of God, you must be holy. That word holy means to set apart, to come apart and be separate as I Peter tells us. The King James says, "I have raised you up to be a peculiar people." That fits a lot of Baptists. A different kind of people. That means you're not like the world.

You know I used to read that there was a broad way and a narrow way and I used to think those are just two highways running. Let me tell you, there are not two highways running. They are running like this. The broad way is like a four lane highway going this way and let me tell you, the narrow way is like the median right in the middle of it. The people that are running the other way, they'll look at you and say, "Man, there's something peculiar about him. He's a junior in college and he's not out getting

drunk on Saturday and going to church and Baptist Campus Ministry and Campus Live standing for God. What's the matter with him?" Holy, holy.

You say, "Pastor, they'll call you names if you do that." Let me tell you, friend, if they get drunk they'll call you names if you don't do that. They don't know what they're saying. Holy. In that great monument, holiness to the Lord.

The other place it's found is in Zechariah 14:20. You find holiness to the Lord. It's a prophecy about the millennium. *In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO THE LORD." And the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the bowls before the altar.* That on those horses' bridles, I'm telling you, when the horses run in the millennium, they're going to wear the bridle and the bells are going to be inscribed and as those horses go, it's going to be holy, holy, holy, holy, holy, holy. Every time they jingle it's going to say holy, holy. Let me tell you, friend, when a Baptist church walks through town, they say, "Holy, holy, holy, holy, holy, holy." God's people, a different people, are holy unto God. Set apart. Come apart and be ye separate says the Lord. Holy. Holy. Holy. That monument standing 555 feet tall, holiness to the Lord.

Second, the second inscription that I choose today is the inscription that is in the monument that says, "Search the scriptures." That amazes me that in our culture – I mean if you're somebody that's just been born, you're 20 years old, you walk in there and it says, "Search the scriptures," some people would even say, "Well what's a Bible?" Our forefathers said, "If you're going to make this land keep going, study and search the scriptures." Where's that come from? John chapter 5 and verse 39 right off the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ where He said, "Search the scriptures because ye think ye have eternal life." That's the King James. That's the way they were inscribing as I said, "For in them ye think ye have eternal life and they which testify of Me."

You see, these were the Pharisees. I'm telling you, the Bible will not save you. You can read the Bible. You can memorize the Bible. I'm here to tell you, the Bible says, Jesus said, "You think you've got eternal life" because they were legalists. What He said was, "They will testify of Me." The reason you study the scriptures is it will point you to Jesus. Learn the truth and it'll point you to Jesus. I said last week, the Old Testament tells us He is coming, the New Testament tells us He has come, but the Revelation says He's coming again. Everything in this book is about Jesus. It points to Him. It says He is coming, He has come, He will come. You ought to study the word of God.

There's another inscription you find in the Washington Monument. I'm not preaching about it this morning but in Luke's gospel chapter 18, verse 16 you'll find this on the walls of the Washington Monument where it says, "Let the little children come unto Me. I won't cast them out. I tell them to come." Let me tell you, friend, what Jesus is saying to you today, "Come. Come. Come to Me." Study the scriptures and the scriptures will point you to Christ. You want to have the greatest Independence Day

you've ever had? Come to Christ. That's your independence. You'll know the truth and the truth will set you free. Amen.

I do a little extra reading in the summer. I've just finished David McCullough's book, *The American spirit*. It's all the addresses that he has given – well not all but it's those he put in this book, the addresses that he put together at all of the colleges he spoke to and he spoke at the Library of Congress. He's one of very few non-elected officials that have spoken to the joint session of Congress. David McCullough is a phenomenal historian. I'm not saying he's a deep Christian but he does read history and when he brings history to light he lets it speak for what it is and it's amazing to me how many times he talks about the people of God through these speeches. How they were great men, godly men. They were doctors and lawyers and preachers.

You know, when we first formed the United States, you could be a lawyer without going to school. It's like you could be a preacher without going. You studied and showed yourself competent and you did it. All those great universities – there weren't any schools. Churches hadn't started them yet. Hello. How'd you get trained? How'd they start Harvard? They started to train preachers. My Lord. Now you can't even find a Bible. I was at Harvard the other day. I was there with Shaun and Deshni. We saw that big statue. What have they got? They've got a big Bible in their hand. I asked those kids, "What do you think that book is, Webster's Dictionary?" No. It's the Holy King James version of the word of God.

Search the scriptures and scriptures will point. I want to ask you today, friend – the scriptures will point you to Jesus – have you ever come to Jesus? I know you're coming to church but I want to know if you've come to Jesus. I know you've come with your family but I want to know if you've ever come to Jesus. Have you been saved today? This is yes. This is no. Everybody in here. If you've come of age and the Spirit of God has spoken to you and said, "You're a sinner," and He loves you, now you decide which way will you go? With God or without God? Will you be saved or not saved? Make up your mind. Choose you this day whom you will serve. Yourself or Christ.

Jesus came to live and die for you. He's the Savior of the world. The scriptures point you there. You ought to read this book every day. Amen. Because the more you read it, the more you'll be like Jesus if you'll do what it says. It'll point you to Christ. It'll point you to Christ, point you to Christ. Get you a book.

Holiness. Be holy. Search the scriptures. Be biblical. Then the third thing I'd share with you this morning is you need to be just. Be just. The memory of the just is blessed. It comes right out of Proverbs 10 and verse number 7 where the word of God says the memory of the just is blessed but the name of the wicked shall what? Rot. Be holy. Be biblical. Be just. Because the memory of the just....

Friend, the word just there, the New American Standard says the righteous. The memory of the righteous. The memory of the just will be blessed. I'm telling you, you're

not forgotten. There's a memory. You've got a legacy. What's your legacy going to be? You'll have one. What will yours be? I've never met a man about to die who said, "I wish I would have just worked one more day. I wish I'd have made more money." Every time. You talk to older people especially that they look like they're staring down death. They say, "I wish I would have spent more time with my kids. I wish I would have spent more time on my knees. I wish I'd have given more. I wish I've have served more."

What's your legacy going to be? The just. Let me tell you, friend, God never forgets when you do right. Amen. This world never forgets. You'll have a memory, the memory of you will be beloved. It will be influential. It will be perpetual. Even after you're dead and gone, that the memory – you've just got to do right.

I am amazed. I'm just telling you, I am just amazed and I'm so proud of you with the death of this sweet, little 13 years old girl, Naomi Jones, over here. Our church kind of gathered up and carried the water. We opened up, well, the whole building, outside, everywhere. We made room through the week, Sundays, sent people out. Don't pat us on the back. We just did right. We just did the right thing. There has been one day since all of that happened I've not had someone unknown to me walk up on the street and say, "Your church did right."

It happened to me Friday twice. I'm sitting with my son-in-law, Brad Hinote. We went to the Wahoos game and we went in and had a little dinner before down in the restaurant area and we're sitting there and I noticed out of my peripheral vision there was somebody coming. You know, you can tell when they're coming at you and not walking around you. This large man – he walked over and he said, "Excuse me, sir." I said, "Yeah." He said, "You're the pastor at Olive." I said, "I am." He said, "I'm just an old Catholic but I want you to know we watched and in that Naomi Jones scenario your church did right." I said, "Thank you." He said, "I just want you to know not everybody would do that but you did right."

So we went to the game. The Wahoos won big. It was a great game. We left in the ninth inning. So we're walking out and just as we're about to go out, a man stopped me, a big, burly fellow. He looked like a prospect. He wasn't. He was just rough. He said, "Preacher." I said, "Yeah." When he said, "Preacher," big tears came up in his eyes. He said, "I'm not a Baptist." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Well that's another story." I said, "Alright." He said, "I'm not a Baptist but what your church did with that family, that was right." Then he said this to me. He said, "The grace that your church displayed splashed over on all of us." Man, I got blessed. I'm just telling you, I got encouraged.

What I'm telling you is this scripture tells you the memory of the just is blessed. If you'll do right, God'll look after you. If you'll live in justice and righteousness and when you find right, do it, I'm telling you, God'll take care of you. Your memory, your legacy, it's right.

I want to ask you today. Are you just selfish and living for you or are you trying to be a servant to somebody else? Friend, when you help others, that's when you're doing right. Zig Ziglar, I love to listen to old Zig. He's dead and in heaven now but Zig used to say, "You know, when helping other people, they asked Andrew Carnegie. They said, 'You have so many millionaires that work for you. How do you encourage them?' It was Carnegie who said, 'Well raising up good workers is like mining for gold.' He said, 'You've got to move a ton of dirt to find an ounce of gold but remember you're not mining for dirt. You're mining for gold.'"

So many of us get caught up on all the dirt in everybody's life that we miss the gold. Dear friend, if you'll ever move the dirt and help them get right with God you'll find the gold. That's the business we're in. Amen. It's easy to throw dirt and stones and say, "Well, you know, this and that and...." Raise them up. Find a man down and lift him up. Your memory will be blessed if you'll be just and righteous. We've got to help people. That's what the church is for. Am I telling the truth? Am I the only one here that believes that? Ya'll are just sitting here looking at me like I'm – sure that's what we've got to do because we want our memory, our legacy to be blessed. After you're dead and gone and one day you will be dead and you will be gone. What's your legacy?

One more thing about that Washington Monument I want you to see. I remember the first time I looked up there. I didn't know it was 555 feet tall. I didn't know it was 55 feet at the base. I didn't know it weighed 90,000 tons. I just knew it was big and tall and massive. I didn't know it had scriptures and other sayings all up through it. What you can't see when you visit the Washington Monument is what's inscribed in the top of it. That capstone's got four sides. North, South, East, and West. When you find the top, that that is there on the north side, you find the names of the commission that put this monument there.

When you go to the south side you find the name of the architect that drew the plans. It's no small feat in 1848 to put that thing together. They didn't have a computer. When you go to the west side you find the dates of when it was commissioned and finished on July 4, 1848 is one of the dates. But when you go to the east side of that four-sided capstone you find two words, two Latin words. *Laus deo*. In praise be to God.

Do you know when you go to Washington the tallest building there says Praise the Lord? Amen. Half the atheists down below don't even know it says it but I'm telling you, it says it right there on the top. Praise be to God. Let me tell you, they didn't just choose the east side because it was the last side to fill in. They put it on the east side because they know when Jesus comes, He's coming from the east side. They're just wanting to make sure – God knows they better make sure in Washington that when the Lord comes the first thing He'd see is praise be to the Lord. I think He'll even be surprised.

Praise be to God. Why'd they put it on the east side? Because He's coming. That's where they're going to bury you. One day when you die they're going to put your feet toward the east and your head to the west so when Jesus comes you can sit up and see it. That's the symbol.

I was out at Bayview one day and was burying a guy. I told the undertaker, I said, "We ought to turn him around." He said, "What?" I said, "You ought to put him the other way." I said, "He's not looking for him and God's not going to know him when He comes." He said, "We can't do that." I said, "Nobody will know." I said, "Turn him around." He said, "We can't do that." I said, "Well alright. I'm just telling you. I'm not the Lord but I'm a prophet and he will not know when He comes." That's the symbolism. When Jesus comes you're looking for Him when He comes. That's why they put it on the east side of the capstone so when the Lord comes, praise be to God.

Tonight over at Warrington I'm going to read you George Washington's prayer for America. Unbelievable. When he finishes the prayer he finishes it in Jesus' name. Hallelujah. It's the only way to pray. The old general knew it too. That's the way you pray. I am keenly aware that there are people sitting in this room today that are not American citizens. The church is not Israel nor are we God's chosen group. That's not who we are. We're Americans and on this weekend we just show a little glitter and glow because we get full of ourselves. We get full of pride but an American pride is lacking today and it needs a little pumping up.

I'm aware that you're here and you're not a citizen of the United States and you love your country. Friend, I want you to know, we do not worship Washington. We do not bow at its feet. When it's wrong we preach to it and tell it's wrong. When it's right we try to encourage it in its righteousness but we bow our knee to the throne of heaven where Jesus abides. I'm reading right now. I just got a new book by Andrew Murray. It's got three of his books in one volume. I'd never read his book. The book is just entitled *Humility*. So I started reading the book *Humility* this week. My Lord. Some of you say, "Preacher, it's about time. You need to read that." I agree with you. Andrew Murray again and again in those first few chapters. He says the root of all success is humility because he says it's like Jesus. Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Andrew Murray, he was just driving that home to me.

Dear friend, if you're going to get to know God you're going to have to come in humility. You have to bow your life before God. I was coming over here with the Congressman before the first service this morning. As we walked down the hallway my two grandchildren came. I left the Congressman. I saw Kathryn and Elizabeth. They stopped and Kathryn did a little kind of curtsy deal. She said "Aren't we cute today?" I said, "Well you sure are, darlin'." I hugged her and kissed her on the head.

Let me tell you, the day's going to come when that little girl has to get over that and say, "I'm not so cute. I'm a sinner before the living God," and bow her heart and say, "God, save me." You'll have to get over your cuteness. You'll have to get over yourself. It's not about you. It's about knowing Him. When you come to the end of you,

you may come to the beginning of Him but you'll never find the beginning of Jesus until you get to the end of you. When you get over you, you'll bow your life before God and say, "Lord, save me. Forgive me. I crown you King. I come to say, You are Lord of all." When you do, God's about to bring a miracle in your life. God's going to move in and move through and move out and make you an implement of His grace. That's what many of our forefathers were.

Oh we hear a lot today about the big names but I'd encourage you to read about some of them you don't know. Benjamin Rush. You ought to read about Benjamin Rush. Preachers signed that document.

You got any money with you today? I know this is the younger crowd. You probably haven't got any money but, Stan, you got any money? You got any money in your pocket today? None. I knew it. Shaun, you got any money? He ain't got a dime in his pocket. I take these young staffers out. I have to pay every time we go. Well just play like you got money, alright? You got money? Look on your money. Turn that one dollar bill over. You got a one, a five, a ten? What do you find on there? In God We what? We trust. If some of you millennials will just take a little money you can be a witness every time you go somewhere. I know you like to get your miles on your car but it's alright. Just carry a little money with you. It won't kill you. In God We Trust.

What do you trust today? I love Ben Franklin. He's on a \$100. Every year for Christmas my mother-in-law used to give me a \$100 bill. She can't do it anymore but she used to. I remember the year she gave – and last time I got that \$100. I said, "Mary, thank you. Franklin, he's my favorite president," to which she said, "Ben Franklin was never president of the United States." I'll not forget that until I die. I said, "I know but he should have been." I'm just telling you, he ought to have been. Even on old Franklin's bill you'll find it.

Let me tell you, friend, whether you're Americans or not Americans, that's a good motto. In God you trust. Do you trust God today? Have you ever trusted Him for your salvation? If you haven't I want you to come right here. Jon's going to sing. I want you to come right here. Have you ever trusted Him for your church membership and direction? If not, I want you to come right here this morning. Have you ever trusted God for your whole life? For your family and your children? Have you ever just said, "God, I'm going to trust You"? I want you to come today and draw a line and make an altar and say, "O God." Come to Shechem as we've been preaching about. Make it Shechem. Drive down a stake and build an altar and say, "O God, from this day forward I will trust You."

Some of you need to come and say, "God, I'm going to trust You for my finances." In God we do trust. So the next time you look up and see that big monument. You see it on television or you're in Washington, just remember be holy, be biblical, be just.