

Mark 11:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ² saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

⁴ They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵ some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” ⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷ When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

¹⁰ “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Luke 19:37-48

³⁷ 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:

³⁸ “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

⁴⁰ “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

⁴¹ As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an

embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

⁴⁵ When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling. ⁴⁶ "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

⁴⁷ Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. ⁴⁸ Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

Four Meditations, Four Conversations & Four Prayers

The First Movement: Shouts & Stones

Holding back praise

Forgive me for holding back, for not loving you.

For interfering or being afraid of what others think if I were to cry out.

For being more a stone, more a pharisee

than a follower, a worshipper

Stir in me the songs, the shouts.

Remind me of how praiseworthy you are.

Lift from me the dullness of my soul.

The jaded faith.

Make me exuberant again about your love, your self.

Let me be in awe of you.

Let us be yours again.



This is the first of four paintings in a series called *The Four Elements* by Joachim Beuckelaer. I tried to figure out which might be first but chose this one: *Earth*. It is a market scene of the fruits of the earth - vegetables & fruit of all sorts. In each painting there is one person who looks out at the observer. In this case, it is the man in the background, casting a sidelong glance at you. Perhaps you are at market, acquiring the fruits and vegetables. What you might miss, however, is that off in the distance is a man leading a donkey with a woman on it nursing a child. It is the Holy Family, Mary, Joseph and Jesus, perhaps on their way fleeing Herod to Egypt. We get so busy doing our own thing we miss the coming of Christ.

The Second Movement: Weeping for a City

Your thoughts on judgment & consequence.

When was the last time you wept for injustice?

When you prayed for the city and the lost?

Forgive my hardened heart towards my neighbour.

When unbelief makes me mad more than sad.

Let me follow Jesus into his passion and suffering.

Into his decision to give to those who would reject him.

Lift from me the hate of the two faced and betrayers.

Let me have compassion upon their day of destruction.

Let me not revel in their downfall.

Not despise the ignorant, the insolent, the blasphemer,
the denier, the recalcitrant, the unrepentant.

Give me your heart of compassion for the lost.



A second painting in this series is called *Air*. It shows the selling of birds at market. The woman on the left casts a glance at the observer, but she seems busy with her hands full. There seems to be a group of nuns looking at the sale of birds. Is it a disapproving or longing glance at the food? Perhaps they are fasting? In the distance is a man leaning back against a woman - a rather inappropriate pose, but this is none other than the prodigal son who has taken his father's fortune to spend in wild living for himself. He thinks he has taken flight but like the birds being sold at market, he will come crashing down to earth. Take heed then, what we think freedom really means.

The Third Movement: Driving out the Dens

What is your Den?

Do we fill the spaces of prayer

with things that robs us of the time and opportunity to grow deep?

Confession & Prayer

Reveal to me the den of robbers that steal my life.

The inability to trust you.

The prayerlessness.

Turn me to you once again.
Overturn what I have exchanged to please myself.
Help me create the space for walking with you every day of my life.



Fire shows a busy kitchen in which meat is being prepared for supper. As always, everyone is hard at work, hardly having time to notice anything else. The woman plucking the pheasant turns to look at you, almost annoyed - "Get out of the way and stop bothering us or lend a hand to help!" she seems to say. The fire is going - it is going to be a feast. But for all the busyness someone has gone out to complain to the guest of honour. Through the door, Martha speaks to Jesus, telling him to send her sister back to help prepare the meal. Jesus is responding to her with the words the artist knew by heart, "Martha, Martha, you are worried by many things but Mary has chosen what is best." Indeed.

The Final Movement: Plotting v Listening

Killing Jesus
Silencing Jesus
He is messing with our lives.
And he won't stop.

Or are we listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit?
Yearning for the truth?
With nothing to lose?

And so here I know I can choose to plot my own Kingdom
or long for yours.
So may your Kingdom come.
Your will be done.
Help me not to resist you.
Not resist you.



Water shows a fish-market. Four of the figures are looking at you now. They want to sell you fish. Perhaps you are a fisherman who is selling them fish. Why are they looking at you like that? In the distance, through the arches, Jesus is calling the disciples to lay their nets for a miraculous catch. He then has prepared a meal of fish for them over a fire. Did he come to this market to buy those fish? This is one of his appearances to the disciples after his resurrection. It also is a reminder that he invited them to fish not just for fish, but to be fishers of men - to share the gospel of the Kingdom of God. So are you a fisherman? Are you on your way to follow the risen Jesus? Are you about to tell the

fishmongers about the Kingdom of God? Or have you missed your mission, your purpose, your Lord? The invitation remains open.