

Words

Scripture Reading — Luke 19:45-48

All the people hung on his words.
—Luke 19:48—

On Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem to the shouts of the crowd, celebrating him as their promised King. On Monday and Tuesday he taught in the temple, frustrating the religious leaders, who wanted to kill him but were unable to “because all the people hung on his words.”

Within five days he hung on the cross because of their words. By that time the people didn’t want him anymore. “The whole crowd shouted, ‘Away with this man!’ ... They kept shouting, ‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’ ... With loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed” (Luke 23:18-23).

My words also bear responsibility for Jesus’ death. Have my conversations always been “full of grace” (Colossians 4:6)? Am I consistently “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15)? Is what I say “helpful for building others up according to their needs” (Ephesians 4:29)? Does my “gentle answer” turn away wrath—or does my “harsh word” stir up anger (Proverbs 15:1)?

Our silent and gracious Savior took our sins on himself, and we are healed by his saving work, in which he declared once for all, “It is finished.” May we be finished with words that hurt, and may we give our tongues to words that heal.

Lent is a good time to review how we use our tongues, and in our reviewing, to repent.

Prayer

Jesus, as we approach the week of your passion, speak to our hearts about what our mouths speak to others. In your name we hope. Amen.

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