

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 19:41-48
August 20th, 2017
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church
Greenville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Saw the City and Wept

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Prophet Jeremiah asks in the eleventh verse of chapter seven, *“Has this house, which is called by My Name, become a den of thieves in your eyes?”* It had become a place where evil people dwell. And the people of Judah had turned a blind eye to what had become of the place where the Lord God had placed His Name. They no longer cared that evil acts of abomination were being done in the Temple, that is, people worshiping false gods. They were no longer embarrassed by the acts of abomination that were done in this holy place. The people no longer were able to blush. You see, you usually blush when you are embarrassed for some reason. The blood rushes to your face because you are not comfortable with what you see or hear. But the people of Israel had become so accustomed to the various abominations of the day that they could no longer even be embarrassed. They had no sense of shame over their false dealings and their covetous hearts and their sacrilegious deeds. Even when a prophet like Jeremiah would call them to account, nothing could make them blush.

Our society today is very similar to the one the Prophet Jeremiah was preaching. We have no sense of sin and shame at all. You watch TV and you see the various ungodly things that people are willing to do and say on camera, you see the immorality and the greed they are willing to peddle, and you have got to ask, do they even know how to blush? Are they not at all embarrassed? Or does the TV god take away all shame? And then there is us, the viewers. Are you as bothered as you used to be by the positive portrayal of homosexuality or of people bedding down with different people every night that they are not even married to? When our society pushes the envelope on controversial issues, and even when various church bodies sacrilegiously follow society’s lead rather than the Holy Scripture’s, does it even shock you anymore? Are you losing your ability to blush at the wickedness of the world around you? Or, are you just becoming accepting of it all? If we are not on guard, this worldly attitude can gain the upper hand in our hearts. You can become so influenced and overwhelmed by the evil of the world around you, that you no longer even hear or recognize the Word of the Lord.

In our society, there is massive indifference to God’s Word and the services of His House. You have all kinds of people calling themselves Christians, who could really care less, who wallow more in the filth of the world than in the holy things of the Lord. This is shown us by how few people attend worship on Sunday mornings in our society. It is shown in how everything else in most people’s lives seems to take priority over the life of the Church. For many Christians, their faith is only a “Sunday-thing,” if even that. The “well, I can worship the Lord + Jesus in any way I want” crowd, would not even

recognize the real Lord + Jesus if He showed up tomorrow. They are too busy looking for thrills and entertainment than to have time to learn about the real Lord + Jesus of the Bible.

In today's Gospel reading, the Lord + Jesus is just as much speaking to us as He was to the children of Israel. Their judgment, their destruction was near because they did not recognize that their Lord has come to them bringing salvation and peace. They refused to repent of their sin and acknowledge Him, so their peace will soon be taken from them. Ironically, the name Jerusalem literally means "city of peace." "Salem" in Jerusalem is a form of the word "Shalom," meaning "peace." So, there is clearly sad irony in the Lord + Jesus' words when He says, *"If you had known, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!"* The Prince of Peace had come to them. But the city of peace did not recognize or receive Him.

And so, as our Lord is about to enter Jerusalem for the last time before His death, He weeps over her. He cries as a parent cries who sees that his child has gone wrong. He cries as a husband cries over the wife who has rejected him for another. He weeps out of love for His people who were blind to Who He was and what He had come to give them. Our Lord is not a cold, dispassionate, detached person. Not only did He take on our flesh and blood but also our soul and spirit and mind and emotions. His heart aches when His people turn away from Him. The Lord + Jesus laments over what is going to happen to them. In the year 70 A.D., just forty years after the episode in this Gospel reading, the Lord + Jesus' prophetic words will be fulfilled. Jerusalem will be attacked and laid siege by the Romans. Thousands upon thousands will be killed. Those not worth anything to the empire will be executed, adult and child alike. The strong men will be kept alive and forced to work in mines or become slaves. Above all, the temple will be utterly destroyed and laid waste. All that is left of the temple to this day is one portion of an outer wall. What is now called the "Wailing Wall."

This was the judgment of the Lord God. Just as the Babylonians were the instruments of the destruction of the Temple in the time of the Prophet Jeremiah. The Romans were His instruments in executing the sentence against Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Israel had rejected the Messiah. They did not know the time of their visitation. When the Lord God Himself visited them and walked among them they did not recognize their Savior. It was their day of salvation, and they missed it. The things that made for their peace with the Lord God were hidden from their eyes by their own unbelief. The weeping of our Lord + Jesus Christ is because he knows the judgment of God is coming for those who refuse to repent. He knows there are those who will be lost, because they will not listen to Him, or hear His Word. They had been so sucked in by the perversion and lies of the world around them, they were unable to recognize their sin and repent.

It is not as if the Jews were not religious. They were passionate for the Lord God, but they tried to get right with Him on the basis of their own keeping of God's Law. They foolishly trusted in their own obedience rather than humbly and penitently relying on the grace of God revealed to them in Christ + Jesus and receiving His righteousness as a free and undeserved gift. And so, they ended up rejecting the very One their own Scriptures prophesied. All their religious passion was for nothing. They wanted something flashier and more glorious than this lowly man named + Jesus. In fact, it offended them to think that is how the Lord God would visit them. They stumbled at this stumbling stone of the Gospel, and so the stones of the Temple and the city were demolished around them. Their lives were taken from them.

This is a clear and sobering call to repentance for us still today. It shows that the Lord God's judgment is real and is nothing to be trifled with. It is not the big joke that many make it out to be. What happened to the Jews in Jerusalem in the first century is a miniature picture of what will happen to the entire unbelieving world on judgment day. Consider, then, how things stand with you. Are you relying on your own good living and praying and obedience to get you into Heaven rather than the Christ alone? Do you look for God mainly in mysterious signs, visions, or supernatural occurrences instead of

in His humble but sure Word? Are the Divine Services of the Church something that has become ho-hum, that you could do without for weeks at a time? Then you are like the Israelites who did not know the time of their visitation; you are not seeing how God Himself visits you in the lowly means of preaching and the Sacraments. You are not seeing that He is here, now, with us in the very means of His Word and His Sacraments. He is here for you to give you His wonderful gifts; to lift you up out of the mire of your life, and set you on the firm ground of His salvation won for you.

Cling to Him Whose heart still weeps out of love for you. Trust in Him Who continues to cry out, *“If you would know, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!”* The Christ Himself is your Peace, Who comes to you in the common things of water and words, bread and wine. He is the One Who brings reconciliation between you and God, the One Who gives the peace that, passes all understanding. This is your day, the day of your visitation, as it is written in the Scriptures, *“Behold, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.”* This is the Day the Lord has made. It is wonderful. It is made for you. This day—this salvation—is made for you. This is the moment in which the Christ is coming to you in His Gospel sounding in your ears. Believe in Him; trust in what He has done for you on the tree of the holy cross; seek His righteousness bestowed upon you in the waters of Holy Baptism.

Our Lord has cleansed the Temple. When the Lord + Jesus drove out the moneychangers in righteous anger and purified the Temple as a house of prayer, that was a sign of what He was about to do at Calvary. For there on the cross our Lord + Jesus Himself experienced the righteous anger of God the Father against our sin and our Lord + Jesus drove all evil out in the Temple of His Body. The Lord + Jesus made Himself unclean in your place. He took all of the greed and the self-righteousness and the callousness and the indifference and every other sin and made it His own dirty mess. And by His holy suffering and death He cast it out and away from you forever. He buried it all in the grave forever.

Our Lord + Jesus had said of His body, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* Though the Temple in Jerusalem remains destroyed, our Lord + Jesus could not remain in the grave. He is now bodily raised in everlasting glory and honor, the new and eternal dwelling place of the Lord God for you. The Lord + Jesus is now your Temple. The risen body of the Christ is full of holiness and righteousness and cleansing. Baptized into Him, those things are all yours. You are now the body of the Christ. And therefore, you are the Temple of Christ’s Spirit, Who dwells in you through your baptismal faith. You are safe from divine judgment, because you are in Him Who took the judgment for you.

“If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!” Dear friends in Christ, this is your day; this is the time of your visitation. Do not miss out. Here are the things that make for your peace, in the preaching of the Word, in the waters of Holy Baptism, in the Body and Blood of Christ, offered up for you for the forgiveness of your sins, for your peace, for your rest, for your restoration to the Father. May the Triune God grant you to be like that faithful remnant in the Gospel that were very attentive to hear the Lord + Jesus, that by His grace you may be brought to dwell eternally in the new Jerusalem above, where all things are made new, and peace is everlasting. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.