

## In Nomine Iesu

### The Tenth Sunday after Trinity 2021 Luke 19:41-48 – The things that make for peace

“Now as Jesus drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. *“For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”*’ Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, ‘It is written, *“My house is a house of prayer,”* but you have made it a *‘den of thieves.’*”’ And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is our peace. Dear fellow redeemed in Christ:

The atmosphere was tense with excitement. Step by step, village by village, Jesus and His disciples had journeyed to the holy city, the site of God’s temple and the sacrifices He commanded Israel through His servant Moses. Jesus had come for the Passover feast and its sacrifice. As He made His way to Jerusalem, Jesus predicted His coming suffering and death, telling His disciples: “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and everything that is written of the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon; they will scourge Him and kill Him and on the third day He will rise again.” Luke adds that the disciples “understood none of these things; this saying was hid from them, and they did not grasp what was said.” Let us observe carefully the example of Jerusalem this morning in order that we may know the things that make for peace.

#### I

Approaching Jerusalem, the Lord sent His disciples to a nearby village and bring Him a donkey. Israel’s King would come into His royal city, righteous and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, fulfilling Zechariah’s ancient prophecy. The crowds welcomed Him, chanting: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:38) The Pharisees burned with anger and frustration. Some of them demanded that Jesus silence the praises of the crowd. But, as He said to them, the very stones would cry out if the people were silenced. For the Messiah, the promised One was here!

But note the change from joy to sorrow in the opening verse of today’s Gospel: “Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it.” Jesus did not weep for Himself, although that would have been understandable, as He looked ahead to the torment that awaited Him that week. No, Jesus wept for Jerusalem, the holy city, the apple of God’s eye, the dwelling place of His saving presence. He wept for His people. In the opening chapter of John’s Gospel, the evangelist tells us that the Son

of God “came to His own people and His own received Him not.” Jesus wept because, by rejecting Him, the people were rejecting the Seed of the woman, who came to crush Satan’s head. They were rejecting the One who spoke to Moses from the burning bush, giving His name as “I AM,” the one who was before Abraham. They rejected great David’s greater Son, who is also David’s Lord.

Jesus wept for His own people. They had, as Paul recounts in Romans 9, received the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God in the rites of the temple, and the promises. They had the patriarchs and the prophets. From their flesh came the Christ, the eternally blessed God become flesh. But they would not listen to Him. In stubborn unbelief they closed their ears to His words of forgiveness and salvation. And in doing so they blasphemed the God whose name they claimed to bless. Rejecting the One who came as the Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice for sin, they are left with their own sin ... and God’s wrath toward sin.

For them our Savior wept. “If you had only known, even you, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.” Dear friends, the truth is that God hides His glory in order to reveal His mercy and love. He covers Himself in the lowliness of the Babe of Bethlehem and the Man of Calvary. Wrapped in our flesh and blood, He comes in the likeness of sinful man to redeem the world. He exchanged the throne of His heavenly glory for the cross. He wore no other crown than the crown of thorns set upon His brow in ridicule. Jerusalem could not see in this Man the things that make for peace. But the blind beggar knew who Jesus was and called out to Him saying, “Son of David, have mercy on me.” But Jerusalem was blinded to this truth and remained in the darkness of unbelief.

## II

Jerusalem had a long history of rejecting God’s call to repentance and faith. She had a reputation for slaughtering the prophets God sent to her. Now she would do the same with her Messiah. And without Him, Jerusalem would have no peace with God. The apple of God’s eye would become the object of His wrath. Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem would find its fulfillment in the devastation that would come in 70 AD when Jerusalem and all who were within her were destroyed. The destruction of Jerusalem stands as a warning of the fate of all who reject God’s Christ.

Jesus says that this fate would befall Jerusalem because she did not know the time of her visitation. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, sang in his *Benedictus*, that “the Dayspring from on high has visited us.” Whenever God visits His people, He comes to bring salvation. This is always true. He comes with the purpose of rescuing all from sin, death, and hell. The intention of this divine visit is blessing. But Israel did not know the time of God’s visitation. She did not know the day of salvation; and she rejected the Son who came to be her Savior.

The words of today’s Holy Gospel are not only a record of what would happen to Jerusalem long ago. The Spirit inspired the evangelist to record these happenings for our instruction in repentance and faith as well. In I Corinthians 10, the Apostle Paul described how the Israelites who had been baptized into Moses in the Sea and partook of spiritual food and drink came under God’s judgment on account of their idolatry and immorality. Then he continued, “Now all these things happened to them as examples, **and they were written for our admonition on whom the end**

**of the ages have come.”** Throughout history God has always called His people to repentance and faith. He is calling us to repentance and faith this very day. He is calling us to faith in the same Christ who came to Jerusalem.

Now is the time of our visitation. No, Titus the Roman general does not stand on the crest of a mountain overlooking our city. No, the 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Legions are not marching into position all around us to lay siege to our town. But is it not true that other dangers threaten us in these days? Is it not possible, in fact, is it not certain, that the day will come when our last hour will be at hand, when the end has come for us, whether as individuals or as a nation? The Gospel Israel rejected **then** is **now** being given to us. God has preserved His saving Word and sacraments for our use. These are the means by which He visits us today to impart and bestow the salvation that He won on Calvary's cross, just as He was imparting His grace and mercy to Israel through the preaching of the prophets, the service of the priests in the temple and, finally, the coming of King David's greater Son.

Just as the Old Testament once foretold the coming of the Christ, the preaching and sacraments of the New Testament now testify that God was in Christ making peace through the blood of the cross. Peace with God means that God does not hold our sins against us but instead has laid those sins on His Son, who atoned for them with His own blood. To believe the Son is to have the forgiveness of our every sin, for our every thoughtless and evil deed, our every heartless word, our every unkind, judgmental thought. To have the Son is to be reconciled with God. To have the Son is to have life not just here but in the heavenly Jerusalem that will never pass away. To have the Son of God is to have peace with God now and always.

To be without the Son is to stand under the gaze of Titus and the legions of death dealing men who march into position all around us. It is to be at war with God. Dear friends, war with God is a battle that we cannot win. If you fight God, you will lose, as the history of Israel has proven to the world again and again.

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But God has brought the war to an end in the cross of His Son Jesus Christ, who bore the punishment of our sins in His own body. He blotted out all our guilt with His own blood. The body and blood of Jesus Christ crucified for sinners are the things that make for peace. That is what God gives us from His altar. As surely as Jesus came to Jerusalem to suffer and to die, so surely He comes here to give us the fruits of His redeeming sacrifice, so that we will not be destroyed. This is the time of our visitation. The Christ comes to us meek and lowly, bringing salvation. God grant you faith to receive Him as He comes in the preached word and in the blessed sacrament to bring you peace. God grant you to live in the peace that He has won, and now bestows on you. Amen.

**Soli Deo Gloria**

S. R. Sparley, 1 August 2021

