

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 19:41-48
August 5th, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Things That Make for Your Peace

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.

Today's Gospel is filled with irony and contrast. And at first glance it seems that this text is all over the place. Jesus is weeping over Jerusalem, then he's chasing thieves out of the temple, and then the chief priests, scribes, and leaders of the people seek to destroy him. This text is all over the place. Usually the Gospel readings have one overwhelming theme that a person can latch onto, but this text seems to have three themes. But actually, these three themes are really sub-themes to the one overarching theme of this whole text.

And in order to learn what that is we have to look at the context of this passage. In other words, what comes before and after the text? A lot of people fall into the trap of just looking at a little snippet of Scripture and then try to interpret all of Scripture from that one little snippet. If you want that kind of theology, go read a billboard. My favorite is "God is peace." Now that is a good statement! God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the God of eternal peace, forgiveness and life in Christ + Jesus. We understand who the true God is, but what about the Jews, Muslims, or Buddhists? What would they say about God, or who He is? They do not have the Triune God; they have a false god. And what of all the people who have no attachment to a religion whatsoever? Their idea of God is what they get from TV and that TV's image of God is nowhere even close to the truth.

Then there is the word "peace" in the phrase "God is peace." Christ mentions peace in today's Gospel reading, and we will discuss that more a little later. Most people think peace means the absence of war and strife, but this is not what peace means to a Christian. Peace to a Christian is the rest and security they have found through the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation given through the means of grace and won for us by Christ's death on the cross.

And then there is the word "is" in the billboard phrase "God is peace." There are some people who cannot even understand that word correctly. Does "is" really mean "is?"

So, you see this is why context is so important to understanding Scripture, because apart from proper context, the word of God is made into a false statement. The context of this reading for today is Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. If you thought there was some irony in the text to begin with, check this out! Our Lord + Jesus is being welcomed into Jerusalem to the sound of shouts and cheers. He is being welcomed in with a big victory parade, and people are shouting, "*Hosanna, hosanna,*

hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!" This is Palm Sunday stuff. We are familiar with Palm Sunday—people waving palms, singing "All Glory, Laud and Honor." It's a happy day, a day of rejoicing. Everybody is feeling good about what is taking place. And on this day, while He is approaching the city, what is the Lord + Jesus doing, as all this rejoicing is taking place? He is weeping.

Why? Because they do not understand what He has come to do. They do not get the context of why He is there. They do not understand, nor see the big picture for "*it is hidden from their eyes.*" They think He is there to become their King, their earthly ruler, who will finally destroy the Roman Empire. He has come to destroy the evil empire, their oppressors, and bring them peace. There is that word again—peace. Again, it is understood mistakenly as lack of woe, as meaning no more strife and war and turmoil. But that is not what the Lord + Jesus has come to Jerusalem to do; that is not the kind of peace He has come to bring. In fact, He in essence tells them the complete opposite. "*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.*" This is why He is weeping over Jerusalem, because He knows its destruction is coming soon. It is a warning contained in a lament. Much in the same way a parent laments when his child walks down a path he knows will lead to destruction. And the tears well up in that parent's eyes as he warns his child of the wrong path upon which he walks.

So, it is with the Lord + Jesus to the Jews. Their judgment, their destruction was near because they did not recognize that their Messiah has come to them bringing salvation and peace. They refused to repent of their sin and acknowledge Him as the Christ, 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, or harmony. So, there is clearly a 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, even though they call Him King.

Now the "*days*" that Jesus is referring to here are the days of the destruction of Jerusalem. What the prophet Daniel called, "*the abomination of desolation.*" Josephus, an historian of the Jews, records these events for us, and this is what he has to say about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70:

The city was besieged at the time of the Passover festival, when the Jews were assembled within the walls of Jerusalem from every land, and as Josephus writes, there were together at that time about three million people in Jerusalem. This was an enormous multitude. Only one hundred thousand would have been enough to crowd the city. But this entire great multitude God intended to bake, melt, and weld together into one mass of ruin. However, the Apostles and the Christians had fled the city, they were actually in Samaria and Galilee and were scattered abroad. Thus, God saved and separated the good grain and burnt up the chaff into one place.

There was such an immense multitude of Jews present, that they were sufficient to devour a whole kingdom, to say nothing of only one city. They also fell into such distress and famine, that they devoured everything and they had nothing left, until at last they were compelled to eat their leather bow strings, shoe latches, and shoe leather; and finally, mothers moved by their distress butchered their own children, which the Roman soldiers snatched from them, for they smelt the odor of the boiling meat through the squares of the city. They used dove's dung for salt, which commanded a high price. In short, there was distress and bloodshed enough to melt a rock to tears; so that no one could have believed that God's wrath could be so horrible and that he would so unmercifully martyr a people—His own people. The buildings and the streets were piled full of the dead, who perished in starvation, and

yet the Jews were so raging that they defiled God and refused to yield, until the emperor was compelled to use force and capture the city, when they could no longer maintain their order and authority.

There were some Jews who were even such scoundrels that they swallowed their money so that it could not be taken from them. Therefore, the Roman soldiers thought they had all swallowed their money, therefore they cut open the people by the thousands, hunting for it. The slaughter and destruction were so great that even the pagans, the Romans, who hated both Christian and Jew alike, were moved to compassion for them, and the emperor was forced to give orders to no longer destroy them, but to take them as prisoners, and sell them as slaves. The Jews then became so cheap that they were sold thirty for the smallest coin they had; and they were scattered and dispersed throughout the whole world, and were everywhere despised as the vilest people on earth.

This is the image of Jerusalem that the Lord + Jesus has as He approaches Jerusalem to the shouts of cheers and adoration. No wonder He weeps despite this victory parade. We would weep too.

Our Lord + Jesus does not weep for Himself. He is not weeping here because He is about to die, He is weeping because Jerusalem has rejected Him and His Word. Our Lord + Jesus is weeping for them, because they have rejected Him to their own demise. They have caused their own destruction. Their sin has brought this destruction upon themselves. They know nothing of the peace which He is to bring to them. Nor do they care for it, nor want it.

In a lot of ways, we are the same way, we know nothing about what God has done for us, and continues to do for us. At least one would not be able to tell from our actions, or from our thoughts, or our words; from our lack of faith in God in times of trouble, and our constant faith in the things of this world and this life. How often do we wish we had this or that thing that would make our life more enjoyable? We say to ourselves that if we had them, then we will know and have peace. "If I only had that dream job, with the good pay; If only my spouse and I did not fight so much; If only my kids would not argue with me all the time; If only I was thinner; If only I was taller; If only I was more muscular, and more in shape; If only I was dating that boy, or that girl; If only I made more money; or lived in that house, or in that neighborhood; If only I drove that car.

We always end up saying, if only I had any or all these things my life would be perfect and great and I would have peace of mind. However, we fail to see the context; the big picture. The problem is that if we had all these things our lives would be so perfect we would not need God. At least we would not think we would. In fact, because we crave these things, instead of the things of God—eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and salvation—we show that we have rejected God and what He gives to us. We show our lack of faith. We show our faithlessness. Indeed, we show our unbelief.

Truth be told, if we have the things of God, and know we have the things of God, and are always aware that we have eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and salvation, then we realize we do not need anything else. We realize we have everything that we could possibly need or want. We become content whether it is in feast or in famine. We realize that this life will NOT last forever, that there is a life after this one that WILL last forever, and then we become excited and happy and cannot wait to get there. And we live our lives according to that context, according to the big picture of what our lives will be when Christ calls us home by the blast of the trumpet. We live our lives according to that word of God, which promises us all good things. We anticipate THAT life; The life with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in Heaven, with all the angels and archangels, and all the saints for all eternity enjoying the eternal feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom which has no end.

However, when we put our trust in the things that God has told us NOT to put our trust in, we reject His word and we fail to see the big picture and lose the context of this life in Christ here on Earth, and the promised life to come, and we struggle and we worry and we weep. But while we weep for

ourselves the Christ weeps for us too, and has compassion on us enough to rescue us from the pit and mire of the troubles of this life; to bring us out of the trap of rejoicing in the things of this life, to rejoice in the things of the life to come. To give us real peace, not the peace that only exists in men's minds, the kind of peace that this false world teaches—lack of strife, turmoil, and war—but the eternal peace that rests solely in Christ and His gifts; the harmony and concord that exists only through fellowship in Christ + Jesus.

When we come to this point we know we have the kind of peace that calms our troubled souls; that gives them rest; the kind of peace that makes us trust solely in Christ, and hang on Him and His Word alone.

This is why we have the cleansing of the Temple right after we see the Lord + Jesus weeping over Jerusalem; we see confession and absolution put into action. Christ + Jesus drives out the robbers, those who have set up shop within the Temple, the place of God's Word; those who have made it a "*hideout of robbers*"; those who have defiled it and made it unclean. He cleanses that which is impure and makes it worthy of His presence again. Our Lord + Jesus just does not weep for Jerusalem only, but He does something about it. He does not just weep over you and me and our fallen, sinful condition, but He does something about it. He saves us, He rescues us. He cleanses us from all sin and evil. He removes from us all that robs eternal life from us, and leaves us clean and holy, with nothing but His word and promise. In other words, with all we really need.

Our Lord + Jesus whips sin, death, and the devil out of us, so that we stop looking at ourselves; our lives; our possessions, and look to Him and His cross. He cleanses us so that we hang onto His every Word; so that we hang onto Him, and will not let Him go for any reason. Look at His corpus on the cross, it is broken for you. He gets whipped and beaten, and suffers and dies for you. He suffers *the abomination of desolation*—the destruction of the One True Temple—so that He might rebuild it in three days, and offer it to you as an eternal gift for your sins. Upon this altar we begin to enjoy the feast of the Lamb in His kingdom. We get a taste of the eternal peace won for us by His sacrifice. We get a snippet of Heaven. It is just enough to feed our hunger, and give us a craving for more. For by this foretaste of Word and Bread and Wine, we begin to see the big picture; the entire context of our salvation being poured into our mouths. Christ's Body and Blood are the things that make for our peace. Christ's suffering and death replaces our suffering and death. So, we need not come to this altar weeping, rather we come rejoicing, singing, "*Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the Highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.*" Come for all things have been prepared, you have been cleansed, your sins are forgiven, you have been given eternal life and salvation. 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.

Soli Deo Gloria!