

Sermon for August 8,2021

Jesus' Words are true. You can depend on them. When the world, the devil, and your own flesh tempt you to doubt or ignore Jesus' Words, realize that Jesus' Words are really the only thing you can depend on in this fallen world. Our sermon Text for today is a good example of one of Jesus' prophecies that has already been shown to be true.

From our gospel text we again read Luke 19: 43,44 - *“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.”*

Along the same lines from the book of Matthew ch. 24 verses 1 and 2: *“Jesus left the temple and was going away when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, You see all things, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”*

And then again from Matthew 24:21 - *“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”*

The verification that it happened: The Siege of Jerusalem from Josephus

“Throughout the city people were dying of hunger in large numbers, and enduring unspeakable sufferings. In every house the merest hint of food sparked violence, and close relatives fell to blows, snatching from one another the pitiful supports of life. No respect was paid even to the dying; the ruffians (anti-Roman zealots) searched them, in case they were concealing food somewhere in their clothes, or just pretending to be near death. Gaping with hunger, like mad dogs, lawless gangs went staggering and reeling through the streets, battering upon the doors like drunkards, and so bewildered that they broke into the same house two or three times in an hour. Need drove the starving to gnaw at anything. Refuse which even the animals would reject was collected and turned into food. In the end they were eating belts and shoes, and the leather stripped off their shields. Tufts of withered grass were devoured and sold in little bundles for four drachmas.”

Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, the city that he loved. And from

the historian Josephus we are told that it happened about 40 years later in 70AD. Why? The people of Jerusalem and Israel had killed the prophets. They had rejected the Messiah. They despised the way of salvation. Jesus called this event the most severe judgment by God in the history of man. Israel, the apple of God's eye, His chosen people had turned their backs on God. God had judged them guilty of unbelief. These words of Jesus pronounced condemnation on them. It was greater condemnation than the judgment pronounced on the world by God when He sent the flood. It was greater than the judgment by God on Sodom and Gomorrah. It was the most severe judgment by God in history.

Jesus had prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. As He did so, He wept. He showed his humanity. He loved the beautiful city. He loved the temple. He loved the people. Israel was God's promised land to His chosen people. But, the nation, the city and the temple would be destroyed in a terrible siege by the Romans in 70 AD, a siege that was actually the judgment of God. The temple would never be rebuilt again. 2000 years later it has not been rebuilt. It won't be rebuilt. There is no need for a stone temple in which to offer sacrifices to God. The body of Jesus served as the final sacrifice for sin. Jesus' resurrected body now serves as God's temple. We worship Jesus as true God and true man. But there is more to this text.

We are given the account of Jesus' first cleaning of the temple in John chapter 2. But in our text today we are given the account of Jesus' second cleansing of the temple. It had become a den of thieves. He cleansed the temple by running the money-changers out of the temple. God desired that His House be a house of prayer. Jesus prepared it to become what it was intended to be by casting out those who had turned it into a den of thieves, robbing the people by selling them – at outrageous prices - sick and substandard animals that they offered for sacrifice. After cleansing the temple, Jesus began teaching in the place that He loved. O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where Your glory dwells. God had been absent from the temple for a long time. Again, and finally, God's Word was spoken in God's temple. Again, and finally, the Word

Made Flesh, the one and only true and living God in the flesh walked and taught and prayed in the temple.

This same Jesus tells us this morning from Matthew 18:20 - “For where **two or three** are **gathered** together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

So it is that He is here with us as God – the Word of God – the law and gospel – the Holy Scriptures. And He is here with us as a man – hiding himself in, with, and under the bread and wine – his body and his blood he gives to us to forgive our sins, ease our consciences from the effects of sin and guilt, and strengthen our faith. We gather in His Name – believing that He is here with us this morning. Though we are few in number - though we are of little or no power in this world – though we have no impressive man-made temple to worship in as the Jews had in Jerusalem - we know that Jesus is the new temple and that He is true to His Word and is here with us. We **believe** He is here.

A quote from Harold Bult: “It is unbelief that damns. Could it happen to us, this unbelief that damns? It could. It comes to many people gradually, like a slow leak of a tire. It’s usually not a blow-out, but a slow leak. Satan pulls people away from the Lord very gradually until it is too late.” Don’t let this happen to you! **Believe!**

Believe in the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all of your mind. Believe in the Lord your God with every fiber, every cell of your being. The Lord Jesus **is** true God and true Man. The Lord Jesus **is** the Son of the only true and living God. He **is** the new Temple for those who believe in Him. This morning, in actuality, paradoxically, you don’t come to the temple, the temple comes to you. The Lord Jesus comes to you as true God and true man, just as He has promised. He comes to you in His Word. He comes to you in His Sacrament. **Believe** it with all your heart - with all your soul - with all your mind! Pray that the Lord will strengthen your faith. **Believe** that God forgives your sins because Christ paid for them with his innocent suffering and death. **Believe!** Amen.