

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

St. Luke 19:41-48: "In Jesus, You Have the Things That Make for Peace."

August 25, 2019 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

### In Nomine Iesu

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Merciful God, heavenly Father, we heartily ask You, that You would so govern us by Your Holy Spirit that we may not neglect the time of Your gracious visitation, nor by impenitence fall into temporal and eternal punishment, but in this our day lay hold on the things that make for salvation and everlasting peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and forever. Amen. (*The Lutheran Liturgy*, p. 151)

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Rom. 1:7, etc.)*

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*The sermon text for today is taken from the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. We read selected verses in Jesus' name:*

And when [Jesus] drew near and saw the city, He wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." / And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers." / And He was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy Him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on His words. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

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*These are Your words, heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. (Jn. 17:17)*

In Christ Jesus, through whom we are justified and have peace with God (Rom. 5:1), dear fellow redeemed:

When Noah and his sons worked on building the ark, none of their neighbors thought a great flood would come. When the people of Sodom and Gomorrah tried to abuse Lot's guests, none of them expected fire to rain down on them from heaven. When the leaders of Jerusalem conspired to kill Jesus, they did not imagine that Jesus' prophecy about their beloved city would come to pass. But it did. In the year 70, the Roman army did what Jesus predicted. The Romans besieged the city of Jerusalem, breached its walls, killed its inhabitants, and burned the great temple to the ground.

Each of these examples—the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the overthrow of Jerusalem—teach us something about the human condition, about God's wrath, and about God's mercy. They show us how unaware or uncaring sinners are about the will of God. Noah's neighbors heard his warnings about what was coming and ignored it. Lot's neighbors saw his

righteous example and despised it. The people of Jerusalem witnessed Jesus' miracles and heard His teaching, and still they sent Him to His death.

Therefore God's wrath burned against these hardened unbelievers. By the waters of the flood, He destroyed all life on the earth. By fire from heaven, He burned up everything in Sodom and Gomorrah. And by the hand of the Romans, He brought terrible suffering and death to Jerusalem.

On the other hand, these events show His mercy too. Many were drowned in the flood, but Noah and his family were preserved. Two cities were burned up, but Lot and his daughters were spared. Jerusalem was overcome, but the Christian inhabitants of the city were moved to relocate before the Romans arrived.

God does not delight in destruction. He wants all sinners to repent and be saved. In Ezekiel chapter 18, He says, *"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone... so turn, and live"* (v. 32). We see His compassion in the tears Jesus shed while looking over Jerusalem: *"Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!"*

The *"things that make for peace"* were the things Jesus was about to do in the city. He was going to offer Himself as the sacrifice for sinners. He would willingly let Himself be beaten, flogged, ridiculed, and crucified. He suffered and died to pay for all sin. This included the sins of the people in Noah's day, the sins of Lot's neighbors, and the sins of the people of Israel who rejected Him. He paid for their sins and everyone else's sins besides.

He paid for sin, so that mankind might no longer be separated from its Creator. He is the One who could blot out the wrongdoing of thousands of years of human history. He could right the wrong begun in the Garden of Eden. He and only He could do this, and He did. He made peace *"by the blood of his cross"* (Col. 1:20).

But so many reject this peace. They want war, war with God. Who would go to war with God? Satan tried it and now he slithers along on his belly eating dust. That doesn't stop others from doing what he did. They rebel. They go to war with God by acting like His Commandments are no longer in place. In our "enlightened" age, many now feel comfortable setting that "traditional morality" aside. Among other things, they ignore what God says about respecting authority, about guarding against harm to the body, and about keeping sexual intimacy within marriage only.

Many who take issue with the Bible's teaching, however, still like what they see in Jesus. They like the Jesus who sticks up for the poor and hurting and who eats with social outcasts. But what do they make of the Jesus who forcefully drives out the sellers from the temple courts, as we heard in today's text? Jesus is the Savior of all people. But He also clearly identified Himself as the Judge, who will condemn the unrepentant to hell on the last day (Mat. 25:31-46).

Early in His public work, Jesus went around preaching this: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Mat. 4:17). Jesus called sinners to repentance. His primary mission was not to diagnose and treat people's physical or social ills, but to address their spiritual ones. He said, *"Those who*

*are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luk. 5:31-32).*

Those who think they need no spiritual care are the self-righteous. They find it easy to point out the shortcomings of others. But they fail to see their own sins. They compare their lives with others and feel they must be on the right track. They haven't made the mistakes that *this* person made. They haven't acted like *that* person does. They have done a lot of good for a lot of people. Others could learn plenty from their example.

This was the attitude of the chief priests and scribes. They took pride in their holy living. They also hated Jesus. Our text says that they "*were seeking to destroy Him.*" Why were they fighting against Jesus? Why did they want Him dead? It's because they did not want to acknowledge their sins and repent.

It is painful to admit our sins. We do not want to believe that we have been as bad as God's law says we have. But by clinging to our self-righteousness and doing all we can to keep our sins buried, we only make things worse. Then we fail to recognize "*the things that make for peace.*" We fail to realize "*the time of [our] visitation.*" By refusing to repent of our sins, we show that we are opposed to Jesus, because He came to suffer and die for sinners.

But the Lord does not give up on stubborn sinners. He weeps for them. The Holy Spirit continues to work on their hearts through the law, so that their eyes are opened. He helps them to see the difference between God's holiness and their sin. He shows them there is no hope for them without Jesus. There is no salvation apart from Him.

Jesus and only Jesus could bridge the gap between us and God. He is perfect God and perfect Man in one person. He came to live the life the law requires. He came to fulfill all righteousness for us, to do what only God can do. We sinners have fallen far short of God's requirement, but Jesus met it. He met it for us.

And then He went to the cross absorbing the punishment for our violations of the law. He suffered for the people's rejection of the truth in Jerusalem. He suffered for every time a Christian house of prayer is used to pedal the world's goods. He suffered for our self-righteousness, our spiritual laziness, and our selfish attitudes.

Whether you own up to them or not, Jesus shed His blood for each and every one of your sins and my sins. The price has been paid. The payment is made. No bad deed went unpunished. Jesus bore the sins of all. He suffered death and hell for all. God and man have been reconciled. The sin that separated God and man was atoned for. Jesus made peace between us. That means you have nothing to lose by confessing your sins – nothing except your pride.

When you repent of your sin, God does not sit on His throne weighing the pros and cons of forgiving you. Your sin was already forgiven when Jesus hung on the cross. So then why should you have to confess your sins? Because you need to remember who you are in relation to God. You are the sinner. He is the Savior. There is no justification for your sinning. But there is justification for those who admit their sin and trust in the grace of God.

You cannot come to this understanding on your own. On your own, you would be at war with God, trying to show how you are better than He says you are. But the Holy Spirit humbles you through the law and then brings you peace through the Gospel. Through the law, He cleanses the temple of your body like Jesus cleansed the temple in Jerusalem. Through the Gospel He fills you with the righteousness and glory of God.

So the work is done for you. Your sins are forgiven. **In Jesus, You Have the Things That Make for Peace.** Is that it? Should each of us go back to our homes secure in the knowledge of God's mercy and grace toward us? Yes! And day after day, we should retrace the spiritual steps that brought us this comfort. You and I sin every day, so we should repent every day. And every day we should replenish our hearts and souls with God's message of peace. Then a week from now, we will have the opportunity to be fed again through Word and Sacrament in the divine service just as we have been fed today.

When Jesus was teaching daily in the temple, we are told that *"all the people were hanging on His words."* They listened intently to Him. They did not want to miss anything, because Jesus had *"the words of eternal life"* (Joh. 6:68). He spoke words that they could not live without. He spoke words of peace, peace for the greatest and the smallest, peace for the good and the bad, peace for you and for me.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.*

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