

The Things that Make for Peace

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

The text for our meditation this morning is the Gospel according to Luke in the Nineteenth Chapter:

And when he 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!"¹

Keeping with a major theme in Luke's Gospel of Jesus' journey to Calvary, that is, the "Journey Motif," our text today continues that movement of Christ with his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As the Lord entered the holy city riding lowly on a donkey, not in the pomp and splendor of the typical Roman triumph, he showed the character of his Messianic Kingship. In this Kingship, the greatest is the least and the least is the servant of all. Jesus draws near as the servant king who works to bring peace. What is more, as the Old Testament Levitical High Priests drew near to the inner parts of the temple, passing from one degree of holiness to the next, Jesus drew near to the true holy of holies where he, as our Great High Priest, would suffer and die to atone for the sins of the world where he would make peace once for all between God and man. Jesus drew near to the physical temple in Jerusalem, which stood only as precursor to the true temple of his own body—a body that would be crucified for the peace of the world. And as he drew near we see that the Lord showed two emotions, grief and anger.

First, Christ weeps. Just like the Lord wept at the death of Lazarus, so here he weeps for the same reason. He does not hide his tears like a young boy who injures himself among friends, but he weeps aloud like a mother at the loss of her only son. Jesus weeps bitter tears because the city of Jerusalem, that is literally, the city of peace, does not know "...*the things that make for peace.*"² That is to say, Jesus ultimately weeps for unbelief. And so, as Christ predicts the destruction of the earthly temple, and as he prepares for the destruction of his very life, as he weeps over the unbelief of Jerusalem, he, in his prophetic office, confirms the words of the prophet Ezekiel who once said:

"As I live, declares the LORD God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."³

¹ Luke 19:42

² Luke 19:42

³ Ezekiel 33:11

Jesus weeps for unbelief because unbelievers are those who have put their trust elsewhere, ignoring the things that make for true peace. And because of this false trust, true peace is then *hidden from their eyes*.⁴

In our Old Testament reading, as in our Gospel reading, we see an example of those who did not know the things that make for peace. Instead of fearing, loving and trusting in God above all things, Israel in the time of Jerimiah put their trust in these deceptive words:

*“This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.”*⁵

Even though the people came and stood before God in his house saying, *“We are delivered,”*⁶ they continued with their stealing, murdering, adultery, swearing and idol worship. Trust was placed in any and all things besides the living God. In response to the fatal proclamation of destruction and exile foretold by the prophet Jerimiah, the people scoffed, saying, *“We have the temple, how could anything bad ever can happen to us?”*

It was clear then in their threefold confession, *“the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,”*⁷ that the people had altogether abandoned the words of the Triune God, and therefore, they had forgotten the One who makes for true peace. Even though Israel treated their temple built with human hands as if it could protect them from their enemies, it could not. The temple was not itself the living God, and as such it could not protect them from their oncoming doom. It could not be the bringer of true peace. The mere possession of the temple would be as helpful in times of need as the filthy rags of sinners’ so-called “good works” on the Day of Judgment.

Honestly though, it’s an easy task to look at our texts for today and point the accusing finger at the people of Israel. It’s easy to look on their idol worship and their persistence in unrepentant sins and see that they didn’t know, as Jesus says, *“the things that make for peace.”*⁸ It’s easy to shake your head at the ridiculousness of thinking that the temple itself could save them from destruction all while forgetting to examine yourself in the processes. It’s easy to see the sins of others, without considering your own. We often forget that God lets us see the sins of our neighbor so that we can both pray for them and that we might examine ourselves. But sinners

⁴ Luke 19:42

⁵ Jerimiah 7:4

⁶ Jerimiah 7:10

⁷ Jerimiah 7:4

⁸ Luke 19:42

are the same in that, without Christ constantly teaching them the way of true peace, they, like the Israelites, will cling to false temples of peace.

In the temple of “live and let live,” the way of peace is sought out through keeping your mouth shut when you know you should be speaking up for the truth of God’s word. In the temple of convenience and “fitting in,” you join in with the gossip or crassness instead of telling friends that such behavior isn’t Christ-like. In the temple of self-interest, you wish that the “problem people” in your life would just go away for good, and then you’d finally have some true peace.

But do you really think that you know more about the way of peace than God Himself? Do you honestly think that you know more about the way of peace than God who tells you to bear witness to His truth in thought, word, and deed—who forbids you from slandering your neighbor with idle words of gossip—God who has placed those difficult people in your life for His good purpose?

Through such sins you rob yourself and your neighbor of true peace. Because without Christ, sinners only know a fleeting peace—a peace that ends when your silence over an important topic is mistaken for approval. Peace that fades when your friend finds out that you spread her juicy gossip at her expense. Peace that shrivels into nothing when that person you wished so much to be out of your life finally is, and now you have no way of saying sorry.

So, Jesus weeps for sinners that do not know the things that make for peace. He weeps for those who oppress the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow, for those who murder in their hearts, for gossips who destroy their neighbor’s reputation and for those who commit adultery lusting after others who are not their spouse. He weeps for those who serve other gods in man-made temples to their own harm. Jesus cries aloud because, in the end, those who have sought their own way of peace, those who have rejected his kingship, his priestly and prophetic office, those who have turned his house into a den of robbers through persistent unrepentant sin and unbelief, like Israel in the time of Jeremiah, like Jerusalem in the first century, they will meet their end not in peace, but in destruction.

As it happened in Jerusalem following his triumphant entry, the Lord’s weeping will turn to anger:

“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.”⁹

As the Babylonians destroyed the temple in the days of Jerimiah, as the Emperor Titus laid siege to Jerusalem in 70 A.D., tearing the temple to the ground, so sinners who trust in deceptive words of false peace will meet their end in destruction. Every false temple will prove to be as secure as the temple in Jerusalem.

And so, for those who do not receive Christ in faith in the days of His visitation, for those who do not take refuge in the true temple of Jesus Christ, the Last Day will be much worse than the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. Christ will drive those ones out of from his presence as an angry judge. He will purge all wicked robbers, gossips, adulterers, and murderers from his presence like he did to the money changers on that day in the temple. So, repent. Turn to the Lord who draws near in all lowliness on a donkey. Turn to him who weeps for your sin and hang on his words of peace.

For though the things of true peace are often hidden from your eyes, Jesus Christ knows the way of peace. And not only does he know it, but he himself accomplished peace for you. Jesus is our Prince of Peace, come to the city of peace, to make peace once and for all.

No, it is not peace with the Romans like many of the Jews expected as they shouted Hosanna and laid palm branches before him. No it is not the peace of health, wealth and prosperity in this life like many false prophets of our day would teach. And no it is not the fleeting peace of security found in the temples of your sin. It is a greater and lasting peace... Peace with God.

The season of God’s peaceful visitation began when our Lord Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. On that day there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and singing the Gloria:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom his favor rests.”¹⁰

The visitation of Christ, the visitation of God in the flesh, meant that the peace of God was being brought to all people. And so our Lord’s visitation of peace continued from his lowly seat on a manger in Bethlehem, to his lowly seat on a donkey as he drew near the Holy City of

⁹ Luke 19:43-44

¹⁰ Luke 2:13-14

Jerusalem. From there, the Prince of Peace cast out the ones selling in the temple to purify that place for his own visitation of teaching. And in that teaching Christ showed that he himself was the true and living temple of God. He himself would be the very place for sinners to cry out, as Israel did in the time of Jeremiah,

“We are delivered.”¹¹

He himself would be the place for your peace. Christ proved himself to be the bringer of peace when, in the season of God’s visitation the crowd led by Judas came out against him as a robber with swords and clubs, encircling him from all sides. Christ proved himself to be the bringer of peace when he was nailed to the cross with a robber on his right and on his left.

Even as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ glorified God in prayer with his dying breath, offering right worship to the Father, the true temple of God, the true house of prayer, was treated as **a den of robbers**. There on the cross, the Prince of Peace took into the temple of his body all your unrighteous anger, your hatred, your gossiping, murdering, and lusting, and there, he received the full measure of God’s anger.

At the cross Christ became the robber in your stead. And there, He crucified in himself all those things that rob you from true peace. In the temple of his body, Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, offered up himself in that holy of holies as the once for all sacrifice for your sin and the sins of the world. And in doing so, Christ showed the way to peace. For through his death, peace with God once more is made.

Therefore, don’t look for that Last Day with terror, but with hope. Don’t wait for the arrival of Jesus thinking that he will cast you from his presence like the money traders in the temple. Because as Jesus received the full Judgment of God on Calvary, becoming the way of peace for all men, so also you who have received him in faith share in this peace. All of you who received Christ in the waters of baptism were killed with him, buried with him, and raised with him. In baptism, as Christ cast out the robbers from his house, so also, he has already cast out the robbing and murdering devil from your midst, filling you with his Spirit, and purifying you as his own house of prayer. God has built you up into the temple of Christ’s own body. And unlike the Jerusalem temple, the temple of Jesus’ Body, the place of true peace, that temple which was crucified and raised on the third day, that temple will never be torn down again. Amen.

¹¹ Jeremiah 7:10

And the *peace* of God which passes all human understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Vicar Jesse Schlie

Trinity X midweek
Jeremiah 7:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Luke 19:41-48
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