

Sermon  
8/16/2020

**Sermon on Luke 19:41–48**  
**Tenth Sunday after Trinity**  
**August 16, 2020**

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

Our Gospel text today from Luke chapter 19 is a severe warning to all of us to not disregard the preached Word of God, or despise it, or take it for granted, or fail to trust in it. If we do our destruction is certain.

So it is that in our text Christ prophesied the annihilation of Jerusalem, because the Jews there disregarded Him and His Word, they despised him and his message of repentance and faith, just as they had despised Jeremiah and other faithful prophets in the past.

Jesus' prophetic word of punishment to the Jews would come later, some thirty years, when the Roman war machine surrounded Jerusalem and leveled it in 70 AD. And this in itself is a lesson for us.

God's punishment for sin is almost always delayed. And this puts us in a precarious position, because by nature when we steal, curse, fornicate, murder, and commit any other sin, and when we are not immediately punished for it, then we think, "Hey, I'm getting away with this! This is no great sin!"

Jesus gave his dire prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction on Palm Sunday. The following Friday he would be hanging on the cross because the Jews killed him.

Usually we remember Palm Sunday with the festiveness of how Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey to the shouts and praises of the common people.

But as Jesus drew near the city he began to weep for sorrow over it and all the Jews there. And then he gave a little sermon that explained why he was weeping with great sorrow. Here again are his words,

*“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’”*

First and foremost understand that in this text Jesus wept for the Jews because they had on the whole rejected him and God’s Word. And friends, while we must see Christ as all love and compassion, when His word is rejected, God follows through with severe punishment.

Now what caused Jesus such heartfelt sorrow over the Jews and Jerusalem is that their impending destruction could have been avoided.

Had the Pharisees and Scribes and chief priests actually paid attention to the Hebrew Scriptures and carefully read the prophets, and listened to the few faithful preachers like Simeon and Zechariah, they would see what made for peace and could have taught it to the people.

And what made for peace then and what makes for peace today is hearing God’s holy Word preached, repenting of our sins, and believing in at the Christ whom God has sent to save us.

Consider our Old Testament text today. Here Jeremiah gave voice to God’s anger at His people, the Jews, because they had rejected his word and worshipped other gods, they were greedy, they were violent, and they were immoral.

But they would boast back to Jeremiah, we are God's holy people! He will not reject us! We have Abraham as our father, we have the law, we have the temple, we have the worship and the prayers!

But the Jews then had rejected God's word in their hearts. They were like those of so many of us today who hear the preached Word and the call to repent of greed, boastfulness, and contempt of others. And yet we let it go in one ear and out the other and fail to improve our life!

The Jews situation was made worse by the fact that they had all sorts of false preachers and teachers telling them that everything was okay.

But there was lone Jeremiah, like Christ in our Gospel text, saying, *"No. It is not okay. It doesn't matter if you are a Jew and have the law, you have rejected God's law and have not turned from your sin. You do not care about improving your life a bit! And because you so despise his Word, destruction is coming."*

And the destruction did come. God followed through with Jeremiah's threat. Jerusalem was sacked and destroyed in 587 BC by Nebuchadnezzar and the godless Babylonians.

In Jesus' situation, the Jews had rejected him, the very Son of God, and the greatest prophet of all; and instead of hearing his word and cherishing it, they killed him.

And because of this rejection of Christ and his word, God was about to punish them through the sword of the godless Romans: and he did, in 70 AD when Titus razed the city and its people to the ground.

Jesus prophetic words came to pass, to a tee.

By the time the Romans siege broke through the Jewish defenses it was an absolute carnage and blood literally flowed through the streets of Jerusalem. You can read about it in Josephus. He was alive at the time and witnessed it and documented it.

So, you see, what is so sad about the Jews when Jesus wept over them, is had they paid attention to Scripture and read through Jeremiah. They could have easily learned, and said, *"Hey, look what happened to us when we rejected Jeremiah the prophet. We were destroyed, and now we have a greater prophet here, Jesus. Look at the miracles he has done, hear him preach with authority. We need to listen to him do what he says"*

But they would have none of it. They rejected their own Scriptures. They rejected Moses' prophecy that God would send a prophet like him, Jesus. They rejected Isaiah, Ezekiel, Micah and all the other prophets who also spoke about the Christ to come.

Jesus had been staring them in the face, so to speak, *"I am he which all the prophets have spoken and said would come. Look at my works. They testify to me! Hear my words and turn from your sin and believe in me and you will be saved!"*

But again, they would have none of it. And they would have none of Jesus' apostles either and persecuted all of them, too.

And God does not permit His Word and Christ to be treated so contemptuously. And so Jerusalem was destroyed. And not just the city was destroyed but the whole Jewish nation, the priesthood, the temple, the sacrifices, it all came to a devastating and screeching end.

And here then is the great lesson: Do not imitate the Jews who rejected Christ and His word.

In other words, do not think you can reject the faithful preacher and still be saved. Do not think that when you hear the sermon you have time to repent of your sins later, or that it doesn't really apply to you.

Should you despise Christ and the preached Word that comes from the faithful preacher then destruction is coming after you, and you will not escape from it.

Now you might ask, *“Why did Christ prophesy Jerusalem’s destruction, for it to only happen forty years later? Why didn’t God just destroy the city right then and there?”*

This is a good question, and the answer is the doctrine of God’s patience.

Think for a moment. Should God immediately destroy us for our rejection of His Word and an unholy life none of us would be alive today. We would all be dead before we are six years old!

No. God is patient and kind, not wishing for anyone to be destroyed. And so destruction is always delayed. This is taught throughout the Holy Scriptures.

The apostle Peter preached this and says to us in his second epistle, *“The Lord is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance”*

Just a few verses later Peter invites us to consider God’s delayed punishment as our salvation and says, *“Count the patience of our Lord as salvation.”*

Indeed, the delayed punishment of Jerusalem was a great benefit to many. Before the persecution of Stephen, the apostles preached in Jerusalem and many were saved!

But the destruction was still coming. And so God allowed a great persecution come to the church beginning with Stephen, and the church scattered away for the most part away from the city. In this way the righteous would not suffer the destruction that was prophesied by Christ.

And so God lets the world go on from bad to worse. He allows sin and ungodliness become the new normal as we see here in California. But it is only for a time. Destruction is coming, and Christ's return for judgment and the destruction of the whole world is just around the corner.

But he delays the destruction, that is he is patient to let his word be preached faithfully by a few. And he provides for this that people might repent and be saved before destruction comes.

It is your job then to gather around the faithful preacher, to hear the word, to repent and turn from sin, and receive Christ and the forgiveness of sins.

*And so it is that God comes to us in the Gospel and says, "Look you sinner, Christ has accomplished everything for you! You cannot even begin to make up for your miserable sins, but Christ, oh through him you are safe and sound for all eternity. He died on the cross for your sins. Turn then from your idolatry and believe while there is time!"*

But when this God's gracious offer of forgiveness through Christ and the preached word are rejected, then God becomes very angry, and first takes away the Word from us, that is, he hides all the treasures of the Gospel from our eyes such that even should we want the treasures of the Gospel, we cannot find them.

I know of faithful churches that have over the years gone corrupt, and now have crazy liberal pastors that preach and practice nothing but nonsense. They had the Word of God, but it has been taken from them and they are now so blind and stupid about matters of the faith.

They have Bibles and commentaries and pulpits but they do not know who God is or what he is actually saying. And so they do not know what to preach or how to save people from their sins.

They are ripe for destruction.

And God prophesied that such things would happen. Consider the prophet Hosea who preached to the Jews and said, *"Israel's arrogance testifies against them; the Israelites, even Ephraim, stumble in their sin; Judah also stumbles with them. When they go with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord, they will not find him; he has withdrawn himself from them."*

So it is that should we reject the faithful preacher, even if the Scriptures remain in our hands, we will not know what they mean. And we shall grope for God and never find Him.

See to it then that you understand that the faithful preacher's voice is God's own voice.

And should we fail to hear and take notice of the faithful preacher of God's Word then He will take it all away and give us the devil

This text then is a call to pray for the church and for faithful preachers who will carefully preach the Ten Commandments and Christ crucified and the forgiveness of sins in His name.

With faithful preachers there is all blessing and spiritual riches, but without faithful preachers you are left with the devil, and destruction is sure to come.

Josephus records that when the Romans had surrounded Jerusalem there was no shortage of Jewish false prophets who preached to the people, *"Peace, Peace. Everything will be okay. God will deliver us!"*

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I feel as though we are in a similar situation as the Jews, even within our own Missouri Synod. Those, like myself, who see our congregations and pastors erring and departing from solid Lutheran teaching will speak up and say, "Things are not right! The common Christian is denied the full course meal of the pure Word of God. These pastors and congregations who imitate the Pentecostals are starving the people!"

And yet we are told to be quiet, and the refrain is heard, "Everything is okay. Peace! Peace!"

I pray that this pandemic will bring the true Lutheran church to its senses. We, better than anyone else can preach what the people really need to be comforted and prepared for Judgement Day: the pure Word of God.

Genuine Lutherans understand better than anyone else God's Word, and we are by far the best prepared to do what Christ commanded his disciples to do, "*Preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Christ's name to all the nations.*"

Amen.