

Sermon for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Preached to the saints of Christ Lutheran Church in Jackson, MS.

August 9, 2026

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Drawing close to Jerusalem, Jesus wept and said, *"Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."*

This text gives us a unique perspective. We often hear Christ speaking objectively about the coming judgment in parables and discourses. But in this poignant scene, Jesus reveals his inner thoughts as the judge.

Parents often know that sentiment - when their children's recklessness has pushed them to the brink. When all they can say is, "Well, I TRIED to warn you... but you just wouldn't listen!" It's a hollow, hopeless feeling, when such a showdown becomes necessary, made all the more so when the burden to administer the due punishment is yours.

So now, having passed in triumphally through palm-laden crowds, the Lord prepares for such a final, bitter showdown with Jerusalem and her leaders. For, indeed, the people surely had not listened - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micha, Hosea; all these prophets and more had, for generations, called God's unfaithful people to repentance. They warned of the coming captivities and destruction, and in tearful lament they were too often met with scorn and death. Thus had John the Baptist of late also preached, only to be met with a grisly end, though now with the approach of this prophet upon his colt, Jerusalem's promised days of sorrow loom only closer.

Suddenly, upon entering the temple, Jesus' hopeless weeping gives way to rage - his righteous fury honed upon all whose smug thievery had profaned and defiled the holy dwelling. *"It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer!'"* Clearly, the money changers and temple officials had not listened either. So he casts them out, and for a brief moment, it seems peace is restored. The Lord is in his temple, though his cleansing it only further confirms the myriad of prophecies that the "end is at hand." *"Who may abide the day of his coming"*... who, but only those who return to hang on his every word?

These events, of course, intone the narrative of Holy Week, when Christ Jesus undertook the burden of atoning for sin, to vanquish death - all *en route* to his assuming the judgment seat in majesty. That's why his words carry weight enough to drive him to tears. From the prophets to today, the Lord desires that ALL would be saved - to the point of solemnly shedding his own blood and dying on their behalf; but to those who will not heed his word, and especially to any who seek to harm his kingdom and his people, he, just as solemnly, vows vengeance.

"Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!" So much is said in this brief, painful soliloquy. For throughout the scriptures, and particularly within Luke's Gospel, "peace" is more than just a general feeling of calmness. It's a word with divine implications. It was the herald of the angel hosts on the night that Jesus appeared in our flesh: *"Glory be to God on high, and on earth PEACE, goodwill towards men!"* And it reached something of a culmination here, when the crowds with palms in hand echoed back heavenward the words of those angels years before: *"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! PEACE IN HEAVEN, and glory in the highest!"*

It was this very peace that was lost on the Pharisees, as well as unbelieving Jerusalem and the rest of the unbelieving world. It's this gospel peace that the world still does not recognize. Not that the world then and now has not been calling for peace, claiming to want peace or to know how to achieve it. Not that it hasn't been seeking to enforce peace through coercion and manipulation in the name of the law. The abuses Jesus encountered in the temple were symptoms of just such legal measures, after all - of a pharisaical system that promised peace where there is none ... and how many since have followed in their example!

Nonetheless, Jesus makes it clear that Jerusalem and the world will stand judged and condemned. Despite claims to the contrary, their brand of peace is not the true peace - it is in fact no peace at all. And in a parallel verse further on in our text, Luke tells us why - for they *"did not know the time of their VISITATION."*

This theme of "visitation" also runs alongside "peace" throughout the Gospel. It was noted by the crowds in Nain - that *"God has VISITED his people!"* - when Jesus raised the widow's son. In prophetic verse, Zechariah spoke of both themes at the naming of his son, John the Baptist - *"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has VISITED and redeemed his people,"* with his son to be his forerunner of him who will guide *"our feet into the way of PEACE."* John and all the prophets before had spoken of the peace to come in the visitation of the Messiah - when God would dwell in fullness with his people. But the old Jerusalem, without ears to hear, did not recognize this - they knew not this peace when he did take on flesh and stand in their own midst.

Ultimately, true peace is only to be found in that embodiment of God's visitation, and of course (for we who are baptized into him) only by virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. His visitation (his *"dawning from on high,"* as, again, Zechariah put it in his *Benedictus*) was always a march to the cross, upon the hills outside Jerusalem - hills set aside for those forsaken by that ancient city. It was there, through his becoming our sin, that those sins could finally be themselves put to a bloody death through his all-availing sacrifice. And it's as his people, now cleansed by his blood, that we await his final visitation not with fear of being cast away, but with hope and anticipation. Cleansed "temples to the Lord" are we all, renewed and poised greet him in his final, everlasting triumph.

It's why we're here. Why we sing boldly, a church built upon the one foundation, awaiting "a consummation of peace forevermore." It's why we proclaim the Lord's death in this sacrament until he comes again - this visitation a current meeting of heaven with earth, in the echoes of the angels' song of glory, and announced with his blessed invitation: "The peace of the Lord be with you always!"

How ironic it is that the old Jerusalem, aptly translated as the "city of peace," would have none of this peace. How tragic the many souls who missed it - how tragic those who still miss it today, still shunning what makes for peace from above and, indeed, their salvation; still not hearing. May it remain our hearts' desire that the Word would someday breach those ears, and likewise may we, as the *new* Jerusalem, remain ever faithfully here, hanging steadfastly on that Word until his final "dawning from on high" heralds our glorious, unending day.

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✠ *Soli Deo Gloria* ✠

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