

## Why did Jesus Weep?

Luke 19:41-48, Trinity Sunday X

August 4, 2013

Beloved of the Lord.....When there are natural disasters in our world, when there are floods and tornados and fires and tsunamis, men often wonder why? Why was this or that city ravaged by fire? Why did God allow the destruction of Pompei by way of a volcano? Why did God allow that tornado to strike those cities in Oklahoma this year or Missouri last year? Why is Detroit such a ghost town today? How can God be good by allowing such evil? But here is another question. If God didn't punish men for their sins, would God be good? When we as parents find it necessary to punish our children for bad behavior, aren't we doing a good thing? If we don't punish our children so that they grow up wild, isn't that evil? Don't loving parents reasonably punish their children for good reason? And when God punishes criminals, isn't that good? Aren't we happy when God punishes murders and rapists, and all this wickedness of man? Doesn't God protect us when He punishes?

While all this is true, today's lesson about the destruction of Jerusalem goes much deeper than that. The real reason God sometimes punishes cities and nations is not so much about their sins as it is about the Gospel. When a city or nation continues again and again to despise the Word of God, namely Christ and His Gospel message of forgiveness, that is a crime above all other crimes in the sight of God. That is to crucify Christ anew. Today as we consider our dearest Jesus, who simply looks upon a city and then weeps tears of sadness, diligently focus in your heart upon that critical reason WHY? WHY DID JESUS WEEP WHEN HE LOOKED UPON JERUSALEM? If you see it, if you understand it, this weeping will give you reason to rejoice.

I. The destruction of Jerusalem. It is surprising to hear, but this incident of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem took place on Palm Sunday as Jesus drew near the city. Whereas we always think of parents and children joyfully receiving Christ on that day, lining His sacred path, we forget that at first sight of Jerusalem Jesus wept. It is written "When He was come near, He beheld the city", and in all likelihood Jesus was at an higher elevation or vantage point, perhaps rounding a curve in the road so that suddenly the whole city appeared before Him. Why did Jesus weep?.....and just imagine the sight! To the best of my knowledge, the only other place in the Bible where we find Jesus weeping is at the grave of Lazarus. What does it mean then for us today if we picture for a moment, the actual sight of Jesus weeping? Look upon Him with your eyes of faith, and consider this weeping in your heart. What actually made Jesus cry?

While there are two answers to this, one reason is simply that Jesus knew the future of this city. As God and Man in one person, Jesus could see with His own eyes

ahead of time into the future, and He now makes and incredible prophecy and prediction about Jerusalem. "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side." This is exactly what happened in 70 A.D. when the Roman commander Titus besieged and later destroyed the city. Yet before this happened, God had already caused the Apostles and true Christians not to be there. They had already been scattered by persecution to other nations, and some had fled to Pella as Christ warned. Just like Sodom and Gomorrah, God had separated out the believers before the destruction. This (by the way) is a fore-type of Judgment Day. IT is by faith in Christ God has separated we the sheep from the unbelieving goats, or the wheat from the chaff. Regarding Jerusalem, the chaff were the Jews who despised God's Word.

We are told by the Jewish historian Josephus there were roughly three million Jews in Jerusalem at the time of the siege. The city was thus crammed full of people, and with the siege no food was allowed to enter. Very quickly starvation and death ravaged the city. Food was so scarce people began eating leather bow-strings and shoe latches. Some mothers even killed and boiled their own children for meat. The bodies of the dead were stacked in the streets like firewood, yet the proud Jews still refused to surrender to Rome. Finally Titus commanded the city to be taken and by a breach in the wall soldiers flooded in. Upon this, many of the Jews swallowed their gold in an effort to hide their wealth, but once the soldiers simply cut them open to obtain it. It was a horrible, horrible destruction which would have made the rocks cry, yet this was the wrath of God upon a stiff-necked and stubborn people who would not listen to the Word of God. Since they had mocked and abused and crucified Christ, since they once said "His blood be upon us and our children", God's wrath now befell them by way of the Roman sword.

We should not be so vain and arrogant as to think the same could never happen to America. In the sight of God we are in no wise a great nation, but America is just as vile as Sodom and Gomorrah, and we are just as ripe for judgment as Jerusalem. Birth control and abortion are legal in this country, as is pornography, gambling and in some states same-sex marriage. People seem to have no problem being lazy and collecting welfare when they are quite able to work, and it is written, "if any would not work, neither should he eat." But worse than all this is the simple truth, very few of us are Christians anymore. Generally speaking America has lost her soul and instead of receiving Christ, she now makes war against Him. How long?.....How long do you think God will permit this perverse and rebellious nation to stand? How long will His gracious arms be open to America? Truthfully the only reason she yet stands is because the Lord is "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...."

II. The real reason Jesus wept over Jerusalem. While we could go on and on about our own sins and the sins of America which merits God's wrath, the point we dare not miss today is much deeper than that. The real reason God's strict judgment and wrath befalls any nation, is simply because they continually despise the Word of God when He comes, namely they despise Jesus and his forgiveness of sins bought and purchased by His blood. In a manner of speaking, while God is patient and longsuffering, He can tolerate the unbelief of men only for so long. God gives every man a Time of Grace, a certain number of years. During that Time of Grace the Gospel Word is preached to them, and Jesus visits them by the preaching of the Word. Jesus' arms then are open for that sinner at that time. But if time and time again that sinner stubbornly and persistently refuses and spurns the pure grace and mercy of God, that door to heaven eventually closes. God in heaven above says "Enough is enough", and He Himself shuts the door, just as He did to the ark before the flood. Let none of us then put off repentance and faith in Christ until tomorrow. Sometimes tomorrow doesn't come. Now is when we should believe for Jesus promises, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

That is why Jesus truly wept as Jesus looked upon Jerusalem. He knew well why He came. He knew all the suffering which would soon befall Him yet that meant very little to Jesus at that time. It was not the nails which hurt Him so much, nor the crown, but what wounded Christ most deeply in His heart, was the knowledge they would refuse Him, though He only came to save them. We are often horrified by the crimes of rape or murder or torture, or the wickedness of a child molester, but the greatest crime of any man is the simple crime of unbelief. Man denies His own Savior. But let us also remember, unbelief is still one of those sins Jesus paid for on the cross - and even now if you are an unbeliever, this sin is also forgiven, and that is why you should believe for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Knowing this we could ask, "Was the destruction of Jerusalem God's will?" Our first answer then according to the Gospel is NO. It was never God's will that Jerusalem be destroyed, rather it was ONLY GODS WILL Jerusalem be saved, for God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." BUT SECOND, when men in persistent and stubborn unbelief continually despise and reject Christ and His saving Word, THEN THEY HAVE BY THEIR OWN UNBELIEF DETERMINED THEIR OWN FATE. Then YES, God's will is indeed the destruction of such a city or nation.

III. My house is the house of prayer. Since the entire purpose then of God's house or God's church is the preaching of this saving Gospel message, this is also the reason why Jesus cast out the money-changers in the

Temple saying, "My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves." This is more than the simple truth the people had made God's house a business. It was far worse than that. They had made it a den of thieves because they robbed people of something - not so much their money, as they robbed the people of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That is the sad state of our world today. While there are countless churches who rob and plunder the people of their money by enforced tithes and the constant preaching of MONEY MONEY MONEY, the real abomination in the sight of God is the plundering, the robbing, the fleecing of God's Church, by the taking away of the Gospel. While ministers can and do fail their people in many many ways, what God cannot tolerate is when ministers fail to preach the Gospel message of Christ, for there in, by, and through Christ, there is more than enough forgiveness for all our sins, so that we are rich in God's mercy, rich in God's grace, and that is why we pray in this house of prayer "Abba Father."

And since today is our blessed day of Holy Communion, let our last word be this, what does God give you in Holy Communion, and should you be afraid? While we have reason to be afraid in that our sins in God's sight are without number, and we daily struggle with such sins and though we want to stop sinning entirely, we never do, it is nevertheless written, "Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound." When you come to communion then today dear friend, do you approach in fear or in faith? As your pastor my desire for you is this, IF YOU ARE IN YOUR HEART SORRY FOR YOUR SINS, COME TO COMMUNE WITHOUT FEAR FULL OF FAITH. There is nothing which can harm you here, but there is free and full forgiveness for all. Do not then fear and tremble before God your Savior, for He is not only God but He is your SAVIOR, and Jesus is a Friend of Sinners. Though our sins merit only His wrath, here in Holy Communion Jesus gives us only His grace. Take and eat. Eat and drink, for this body and blood is "given and shed for you for the remission of sins." Amen.

**...and now may the PEACE of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.**