**The Things That Make for Your Peace**

 **Luke 19:41-48**

Our text for meditation is the Gospel lesson read earlier as recorded by the evangelist St. Luke.

We pray Luther's Prayer before the sermon: Eternal God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give us Your Holy Spirit who writes the preached Word into our hearts. May we receive and believe it and be cheered and comforted by it in eternity. Glorify Your Word in our hearts and make it so bright and warm that we may find pleasure in it, through Your Holy Spirit think what is right, and by Your power, fulfill the Word, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your Son our Lord. Amen.

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

What makes for peace? Jesus comes to Jerusalem, and looking over the city, he weeps 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."*

Jesus describes the total destruction of Jerusalem that will 40 years after Jesus Resurrection. There will be utter desolation of those things which the Jews loved. The enemies of the people would utterly destroy them and their children. Why? Because they did not know the time of their visitation.

God had come to His people. God had spoken to His people Israel. God had sent His servants, the prophets to His people, it was through the mouth of these men that God had spoken to Israel. By ignoring the words of these men, they had really ignored God’s Word to them.

God had called the people to repentance. He had told them to repent and to turn from their false gods and return to Him. He called them to repent of their false trust in themselves, and trust instead in Him. He had pointed them, again and again, through His mouthpieces, the prophets, to look forward to His Messiah, the Christ. And now that Christ was there, they still did not see Him. They did not recognize Him for who and what He was, because they had their own selfish ideas of what Messiah should be.

What does God want from the people of Israel? Is it something complicated? Does He want perfection from them – righteousness and holiness? If they could give it, yes! However, they cannot. Instead, the message of God’s Word through the mouths of His prophets has always been the same – a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Holiness given in the cleansing of sin.

In Jeremiah, we understand that the people of God would come into the temple, rejoicing in their deliverance from sin, but even as they did so, they had every intention of going back and doing the same sins. They were like pigs who would get washed off with the intention of rolling around in the mud again. In doing so, they had turned God’s house into a den of robbers – they would come and receive God’s grace, but spitting on that grace as they were planning their next foray into the same sins, even as they were making the sacrifice to pay for their past unholinesses. They robbed God – and it did them no good.

It is true that as we look at God’s Word to us, we often think of His law. One of the uses of God’s law is its function as a mirror. When we look into a mirror we see what we look like. When God’s servants speak His Word of Law. it is done to show expose sinfulness. It is a mirror to get you to look at yourselves and see your wretched state. God wants each of us to look at ourselves as He sees us. He wants us to see ourselves in our sinfulness, our hopelessness.

Why would He do this? Why would He want us to see our helplessness? So that we come to Him in repentance and rely upon Him for redemption. God wants you to know the things that make for your peace. He wants you to see His visitation upon you, as He comes with His marvelous gifts of grace.

As Jesus saw Jerusalem, He wept. Why? Because the people there didn’t know what made for their peace. The teachers of the law had added so many rules and guidelines to live by, that the people thought they were holy because they kept them. What is more, they saw themselves as the blood descendants of Abraham, and they believed that fact alone was enough. They were anything but holy and sinless. Only those who trusted in God’s promised Messiah, those who had a faith like Abraham’s, were Abraham’s children.

My friends, are you like the people of Israel? Do you know the things that make for your peace? Do you think that you are God’s child because you are here this morning, that you have done your bit for God by coming to church? Do you think that you are right with God because your name is on the membership roster of Zion/St. Peter/St. John Lutheran Church? Is it your works that you are trusting, that you are a ***good*** Christian? If so, Jesus weeps over you as He wept over Jerusalem.

Are you like the people of Israel? Do you know the things that make for your peace? Do you think that because you are confirmed, that you are member of this congregation, you can do whatever you want? That you have earned salvation? If so, Jesus weeps over you as He wept over Jerusalem.

Are you at peace with God because of your life? Are you at peace with God because you are a ***good*** Christian? Are you at peace with God because of your works and deeds in the world to help and assist others?

Are you at peace with God? Or, is there doubt in your mind, not peace!

Do you know the things that make for your peace? Do you know the time of your visitation? Little Bethan Pettis will know of it this morning. In the water of Baptism, the Holy Spirit will work the miracle of faith and repentance in her. She will know that she is at peace. Oh that we all remained in that faith, that childlike faith, that faith which questions not.

Do you know the things that make for your peace? Do you know the time of your visitation? Do you know that Christ visits you, and delivers peace to you in the absolution spoken into your ears? He declared it to be so on the night He was raised from the dead.

 Remember what happened? *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."*

 *When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."* (John 20:19‑23 (ESV)

Do you know the things that make for your peace? Do you know the time of your visitation? Do you know that Christ visits you, and delivers peace to you when He feeds to you His very own body and blood? It is why the pastor, after consecrating the elements, lifts them, and with his face hidden behind them so you are not looking at him, says, “The peace of the Lord be with you.”

If you know that this is what makes for your peace…if you know that this is Christ’s visitation... Then why is it that you are not celebrating that holy meal every week to receive the marvelous gifts God bestows? Or, might it be that you do not know the time of your visitation and that which brings you peace?

Many miss out on God’s marvelous gifts of grace. Too often, God’s gifts which bestow and give His peace and forgiveness are despised or thought meaningless. Some think the gifts can somehow become meaningless if we mindlessly go through the motions of worship.

The things that make for your peace are present in Word and Meal. Christ’s visitation happens whether you and I are aware of it or not – whether we are focused upon it or not.

In the preaching and in the service, God speaks to you. He speaks to you and me and says, “Repent of your sins, repent for the forgiveness of sins – repent and receive My forgiveness – know those things that make for your peace.

Your peace? What makes for your peace? If we stand before God in our flesh we must be judged guilty of sin – unholy and unrighteous. Each of us is guilty. God’s judgement against sin is His eternal wrath and punishment. God’s judgement against any one sin is His eternal wrath and punishment. That is not peaceful.

So what makes for your peace and mine? The One who weeps over Jerusalem, the Christ, says, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.”

God’s Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, the Son of David who would sacrifice His own lifeblood to purchase their release from sins, stood in their midst and they did not recognize Him as their peace. The prophets who had come with God’s Word to them, they did not recognize as bringing God’s peace.

Today, do you recognize the things that make for your peace? Christ sacrificed His perfect holiness and righteousness upon the cursed tree to purchase your release from sin. Christ took upon Himself the Father’s wrath against you for your sin. Jesus defeated Satan by dying in your stead to give you the victory in your battle over the devil, the world and your sinful flesh. This peace, He comes to give to you. Do you know the things that make for your peace? They are indeed hidden from your eyes, but the Holy Spirit opens your eyes to see them. Do not miss the time of your visitation.

The blood from Christ’s wounds comes to you today. It cleanses you from unholiness, making you holy. It covers you with God’s grace and appeases the wrath of the Father. God speaks and you listen. He comforts you and brings you His peace just as the prophets of old came to the Israelites, for it is God who speaks to you through His called servants. Hidden in the speaking of a man, the called under-shepherd, God’s voice is heard. He has been called not to speak his own pious words, but he has been called by God to speak God’s Word of peace to you. He speaks God’s Word of forgiveness which frees you from sin and God’s wrath against sin, and bestows upon you God’s peace.

Christ actually bestows peace to you in the sermon. That is why the pastor proclaims what Scripture directs him to proclaim to you, “The ***peace*** of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.” Do you know the things that make for your peace?

Christ comes, bringing peace. He is hidden under the outward forms of bread and wine. He gives you to eat and drink of His body and blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, that which brings you peace. That is why the pastor blesses the table and says, “Depart in peace!”

Having eaten, the Holy Spirit moves you to recognize that you have been visited by Christ and received peace. You respond with Simeon’s words, having held the Christ. “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation: which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel.”

Dear beloved of God, Jesus comes to you in this place and gives you His peace. The blood He shed upon Calvary, He comes and pours out upon you. His wounded hands come and pick you up. He speaks to you. Now is the time of your visitation. Christ Himself comes to you and gives you His peace. Christ is hidden in earthly things but present among His people, bestowing His peace.

Today is the time of your visitation, to receive the things that make for your peace. One final Word you will hear as you prepare to leave this place. It is the under-shepherd’s faltering voice, but God speaks to you in His Words. And as God speaks in His Word to you, He bestows and makes reality the promise contained therein: The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

It is just as God promised to Moses, “They shall put My name upon the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.”

Do you hear, see, and taste God’s peace? Do you know the things that make for you peace? Christ is here today giving those gifts to you which bestow God’s peace upon you. Rejoice and be glad in them. Know that today is the day of your visitation. Christ has come to you, bestowing His love, mercy, grace and peace. He has destroyed all doubt. Live in His peace – in the name of Jesus. Amen.