

26th Sunday after Pentecost
“For Jesus’ Sake” (Mark 13:9-11)
November 17, 2024
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for the Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Mark 13:9.

“9 “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11 But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.”

So far the text...

The disciples had just pointed out to Jesus the beauty and grandeur of the temple. Look how massive those stones are! What magnificence! Yet, Jesus steered their attention away from the temporal and that which is imperfect to that which is eternal and perfect.

For Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone and the temple that He builds is made of living stones – His redeemed believers. For He takes that which is on the scrap heap – sinners like you and me - and places it on Himself and forms a spiritual house!

Jesus is very blunt and direct to His disciples. Not one stone of this temple will be left upon another. Why? Because the world prizes its own sake over Jesus. Our sinful flesh since the fall of Adam and Eve chose to follow one’s own desires and my own sake rather than God.

Simply put, that’s why there are wars and rumors of wars, famines earthquakes and disasters. That’s why people hurt each other – because they live for their own selfish sake. The temple itself was destroyed, thoroughly demolished by the Romans in 70 AD because the Jews had rejected Jesus, and God therefore rejected them.

The people of the world are the same today. Man's sinful flesh seeks its own glory, dominance of others. Sinful man lives to serve oneself for one's own sake. Your sinful flesh and mine seek to serve oneself for our own sake. What frustration when we see and experience this in this world and in our own selves! We even have created our own euphemisms to describe our frustration and annoyance. "For goodness sake! For heaven's sake! For Pete's sake!" To avoid taking the Lord's name in vain, people say these expressions – using Peter's name instead of God's name.

In Mark chapter 8, Jesus said these words:

Mark 8:35

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

Man's way of serving self and his own life will result in loss – complete loss and devastation – just like the physical 2nd temple built by Herod.

Yet, Jesus came to the world to rescue it and save it! He didn't serve Himself but served us and gave His life as a ransom for many! He who repents of one's sin and forsakes self, loses his or her life, and trusts in Jesus, for Jesus sake, will be saved. Jesus said in John 17:

John 17:19

And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

The truth that sets you free is the Gospel of forgiveness as we heard on Reformation Sunday!

2 Corinthians 8:9 – tells us this beautiful Gospel.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

And again in 1 John 2 we are called His children for Jesus' sake!

1 John 2:12

I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

Jesus, the High Priest, offered Himself as the one final sacrifice on the altar of the cross to remove the world's sin. He tore the veil of the temple so that there is now access to the Holy of Holies, to God's very presence because God's people are presented holy by the blood of Jesus. So we saw the beautiful vision of St. John on All Saints Day of the saints clothed in white robes!

Jesus built a new temple by His death and resurrection! A living temple of the communion of saints.

The Chief Cornerstone Himself had to be rejected but then became the most precious stone. For the sake of the world Jesus gave His life on the cross and paid for the sins of the world so that a new living temple could be built on Him.

4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,"

God's people will not be put to shame. But as Jesus was persecuted so will His followers be also. So, we heard on All Saints Day Jesus forewarn us in His sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:11

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

But, Jesus reminds us quickly and comforts us with this promise:

"12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven,"

So, there are birth pains that God's people experience – troubles in the world – disasters in the world and persecutions of Christians. This is a given. If one is a follower of Jesus, for His sake we will gladly follow Him through all the tribulations of this world. For we are promised by our Lord that they will one day cease. One day we will rest from our

labors and begin our eternity in heaven where there is no sin or wars or persecutions or famines or disasters or tears or sadness! Jesus simply says:

“13 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

Though we are persecuted, delivered to councils, and beaten down, God promises that he who endures will be saved. We endure. Our epistle reading from Hebrews 10 exhorts us to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

We endure by stirring up love and good works in each other. We endure by coming to God’s house to hear His Word and receive His forgiveness in His absolution and the Lord’s Supper. We endure by exhorting one another with His Word, all the more knowing that the Day – the final Day is approaching!

For Jesus’ sake we dedicate our lives to Him because for our sake He has saved us and prepared our heavenly home. Onward Christians soldiers – for Jesus’ sake!

Amen!

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)