

Luke 19.41-48
10th Sunday after the Feast of the Holy Trinity
20 August 2017
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Topeka, Kansas

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Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I'm gonna give away the shop right away this morning. The whole point of today's sermon is this.

The Lord Christ who baptized you into His holy death and resurrection. The Lord Christ who weekly comes to you with His Word on the lips of His servants. The Lord Christ who every week places into your mouth His holy Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all your sins. When He does all those things, He does them in earnest. Let me say that again. When Jesus baptizes you, preaches the Gospel to you, and puts His Body and Blood in your mouth He's serious about what He's doing. He wants to save you. That's the point.

There's no fake-out move. There's no faint and parry. There's no bait-and-switch. Because to each of those things He's attached His promise. "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." "Faith comes through hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ." In the Sacrament He gives "the forgiveness of sins." And "where there's forgiveness of sins there's also life and salvation."

So I can say for certainty to everyone sitting in this nave today: Jesus wants to save you.

You might've shown up today for a different reason. But not Jesus.

You might've come tentatively and lacking confidence in what's going on. But not Jesus. You might've thought He came today to save others, but not you. But not Jesus. Because wherever Jesus comes He comes with grace and mercy. Wherever He comes He comes with forgiveness of sins. And salvation. And everlasting life in His name.

Big surprise, eh? To hear it on the airwaves, to hear it in the imagination of your fellow Americans—I challenge you, go to talk to your neighbors about this—He's got another game He wants to play. It's a game of reciprocity. It goes by different names. Sometimes it's called "when I say, 'Jump,' you say, 'How high?'" Other times it's called "What would Jesus do?" or "Do more, do better."

Really? I'm supposed to save the world from its sin? Isn't that what Jesus does? And really? Didn't Jesus save me precisely because even when I try to do better and try to do more I can't and only become more cognizant of my sins?

But make no mistake. This is why God always shows up: to save.

He shows up in the Garden in the midst of our first parents' great shame. And He comes with what's a curse to Satan but a promise to all mankind: "He shall crush your head."

He shows up hundreds of years later in the midst of a world growing increasingly wicked and He tells Noah: "It's going to rain. A long, long time. But I will save you. Build an ark."

Thousands of years later His voice comes and provides salvation for Isaac: a ram instead of the death of the only son.

When He visits Moses in the burning bush it's for no other reason than to set free and save and redeem His people from their slavery.

And on the Last Day? Why's Jesus gonna show up? To condemn? No. He came into the world not to condemn the world. (Jn 3.17) That's what He says. Instead He's going to show up to save—to save all His believers from their death, from their sin, from their hell.

You think of all the rest of the times God shows up in the Bible. And that's what you'll find. He comes to save. He comes with salvation. He comes with undeserved favor. He comes with mercy and pity on His fallen creatures. *And that's just how God showed up in the Gospel we just heard.*

Now, it's important to understand the context her. This episode comes right in the middle of His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and it begins, "Now, as He approached the city, He wept over her."

He wept because He had come to save. He wept not for Himself, but because He knew what lay in store for Jerusalem which is just what He wanted to save her from.

He wept not in the face of His own suffering, but because of the destruction that years later would come upon the very city in which He would in 5 short days pour out His blood for the life of the world.

He wept because *now* was the time of His gracious visitation. The time when He was being quintessentially the God He had always been—the God who comes to save. The time of His coming with salvation. The time of His coming with grace and pity and mercy. A pity and mercy so deep that it could be met only with the loss of His own life. That the world might live. That could be met only by suffering on His holy Cross the hell that they deserved. That could be met only by being named and made to be "sin" so that sinners could be freed and loosed and absolved of all theirs.

And so He wept. Not out of anger, but out of frustration.

Because as much as winning and giving and delivering salvation doesn't rest in your hands, rejecting it does.

And that's exactly what Jesus wept over. The Temple? The place where God had promised in the Old Testament to come with the forgiveness of sins for all the people? The place where God came to purge Isaiah of his sin by touching a burning coal to his lips from the altar? Well...the people came for a different reason. God didn't. He was still serious about saving them. But not the people.

Some of them lacked confidence in what God was up to there. And so they rested their certainty not in the God who saves, but in themselves. Others of them?

Why, they were just like you! Good people go to church. I'm "good people." Therefore I go to church. Which completely misses the mark.

In ancient Israel, you didn't go to the Temple because you were good people. Nor did you go to see and be seen. To meet some social expectation. You went to the Temple because you needed a Savior. And that's where the saving God promised to be with His salvation.

Now, draw the line to Topeka on 20 August 2017. As the saying goes, the more things change, the more they stay the same. I know there are some of you here today because you're "good people." I know some of you here today are thankful that the Lord kick-started the whole salvation thingy, but you're scratching your head wondering what you need to do next to finish the job up. I know that there are

some of you here today to see and be seen, to meet some social expectation—what your in-laws think you ought to be doing. Or because you think your kids will turn out to be rotten apples if they don't have the moral influence of the church.

But make no mistake. You might've shown up with all those and many other reasons. But the Lord Jesus? He's here for no other reason than to save you. He's here for no other reason than to put to death your Old Adam with all his scurrying and doing and seeing and being seen and finding the right formula in life, the right balance between sports and church and life and church and work and church, to be successful and rich and not in trouble and "good people." Because none of that, none of it whatsoever, is the road of salvation. None of it, none of it whatsoever, are the things that make for peace—not now, and especially not for your eternity. Because none of it back then did one stinking thing to tear down barricades, to forge an escape route out of the besieged city, to keep one stone upon another. No, instead, the Lord Jesus came to put all that to death and to save you from it all.

Because when He died for you—think about that, He *died* for you—He was dead serious about it. He wanted to save you!

When He baptized you He was dead serious about it. He wanted to save you!

When He sends you a preacher—think about it, 2,000 years after He rose and ascended into heaven, He still sends you a preacher!—when He does that, He's dead serious. He wants to save you!

And then—the icing on the cake, thing you can't argue with because it He puts it into your very mouth?—when He gives you His Body and Blood in the Sacrament? He's dead serious. He wants nothing other—nothing other—than...to...save...you. Through the forgiveness of all your sins in His holy name.

Fellow-redeemed: It doesn't matter why *you* showed up today. Not a bit. Think nothing of why Jesus is here. None of that changes anything. He may weep at your hardness of heart. He may weep because you don't want what He gives. He may ransack the temple of your heart with His Law.

But the only reason He does any of that is this. This is the hour of your visitation. And what He wants to bring and offer and give and deliver to you is nothing other than the things that make for peace. He wants to save you.

In the blessed name of Jesus.

Amen.

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