

⁴¹ Now as [Jesus] drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.” ⁴⁵ Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house is a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” ⁴⁷ And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, ⁴⁸ and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

Text: Luke 19:41-48 A 8-9-26 Jer. 7:1-11 Ro. 9:30-10:4 Ps.: 100 Psalmody: p. 29, WS
Hymns: 2, 16, 419, 48

WHY WE COME TO CHURCH

To Thy temple I repair; Lord, I love to worship there
When within the veil I meet Christ before the mercy seat.

I through Him am reconciled, I through Him become Thy child.
Abba, Father, give me grace In Thy courts to seek Thy face.

While Thy glorious praise is sung, Touch my lips, unloose my tongue,
That my joyful soul may bless Christ the Lord, my righteousness.

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Jesus had just rode into Jerusalem on a donkey with the crowds shouting, “*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!*” (Lk. 19:38). Unlike a sinful man basking in personal glory, Jesus, the Son of God, turned His attention to Jerusalem and the people there. We’re told, “*Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it.*” It broke Jesus’ Savior heart to see the sad spiritual condition of most of the people.

John says in his Gospel that Jesus “*came to His own, and His own did not receive Him*” (Jn. 1:11). Jesus came to the Jews as their promised Messiah, but most of them rejected Him and the salvation He came to bring. That’s what caused Jesus to cry. Jesus was crying for them. Jesus was sad because in rejecting Him they were going to hell. Peter says about Jesus, “*He cares for you*” (1 Pet. 5: 7). Jesus cares about us. The Bible says, “*The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*” (2 Pet. 3:9)

Jesus said, “*If you had known, even you, especially in this your day.... ...you did not know the time of your visitation.*” If the people had known by faith that Jesus Christ is their promised Messiah – if they had believed in Jesus as their Savior.... How sad that most of the Jews refused to believe in Jesus, the Savior they had been waiting for.

Jesus spoke of “*the things that make for your peace.*” The people had their hearts set on an earthly peace: freedom from Rome and anyone else, and earthly power and prosperity. Jesus

said, *“In the world you will have [trouble]”* (Jn. 16:33). The people didn’t want to hear that. So most of them rejected Jesus because He wasn’t the kind of Messiah they wanted.

Originally, God made everything perfect (Gen. 1). Originally, we had perfect earthly peace. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God, bringing sin into His creation. Ever since, nothing in creation is perfect. We are sinful. Everyone is. Our sins and the sins of others make sure that we’ll never again have perfect earthly peace. We misunderstand Jesus if we look on Him as an earthly Deliverer who came to give us perfect earthly peace. When Jesus spoke of *“the things that make for your peace,”* He was talking about spiritual peace. Jesus says, *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you”* (Jn. 14:27). Jesus gives us peace in forgiving our sins and taking our guilt away (Jn. 1:29; Mt. 9:2). Jesus gives us peace in promising us, *“I am with you always”* (Mt. 28:20). Jesus gives us peace in causing *“all things”* to work together for our good (Ro. 8:28). Jesus gives us peace in giving us eternal life in heaven. Jesus says, *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”* (Jn. 11:25-26)

Jesus said about the Jewish nation, *“Now [these things] are hidden from your eyes.”* As long as they remained in their rejection of Jesus, they would be blind to the truth of salvation. God told His Old Testament prophet Isaiah, *“Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed”* (Is. 6:9-10). Jesus kept telling the people the truth about Himself and the salvation He brings. But most of them refused to listen to Him and believe in Him.

If we try to make God be only what we want Him to be, and not who He says He is and how He tells us He saves us, we won’t understand Him. How true it is with all of us by nature, *“...a man hears what he wants to hear, and disregards the rest”* (Simon and Garfunkel in the song, “The Boxer”). God in His grace has to open our eyes to the truth that our spiritual needs are our greatest needs, that we are sinners who need Jesus Christ to save us, that all of the Bible is from Him – the Word of God – and that the Bible’s central message is salvation by faith alone in Jesus, who died for our sins on the cross and rose again. (Jn. 3:16)

Jesus said about Jerusalem, *“Days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another....”* With those words Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews’ capitol city where their magnificent temple stood, in 70 AD by the Romans. The majority of the Jews didn’t ask Jesus for help and guidance. The Jews as a nation went their own way, away from God, and ended up bringing destruction upon themselves.

We read in Jeremiah 7:3-4, *“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Amend your ways and your doings.... Do not trust in these lying words, saying, “The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.”’”* Most of the Jewish people believed that because they were Jews who worshiped at the temple in Jerusalem, that in itself made them God’s saved people. Jesus tried to show them that they were sinners who needed to repent of their sins and live the way He, God, told them to live. Trusting only in who they were and going

to the temple was a problem that the Jews still had in Jesus' day. That's why Jesus wept over the people of Jerusalem, and why He predicted their destruction.

It's good that we're members of Ascension Lutheran Church, and of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. But don't trust in who you think you are and your church membership to save you. Trust in Jesus alone for your salvation. We join a church and church body where the Word of God is being taught in its truth and purity. The main reason we come to church is to hear about Jesus and our salvation in Him. God looks into our hearts to see if we believe in Jesus as our Savior from sin. Everyone who believes in Jesus is God's child and is saved (Jn. 3:16).

Jesus told the Jewish leaders, *"It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"* Jesus threw out people who were doing business on the temple grounds. Matthew informs us that the Jewish leaders challenged Jesus with the question, *"By what authority are You doing these things?"* (Mt. 21:23). Jesus had the authority to cleanse the temple because Jesus is the Son of God. Some people were selling animals for sacrifice right there on the temple grounds. That would be like people with whom our church does business setting up shop in our church entryway. Church isn't a place of business. Church is a place we go to to pray and worship God and hear His Word. Our focus here is on spiritual things.

We're told that Jesus *"was teaching daily in the temple. ... for all the people were very attentive to hear Him."* That's what the temple was for. That's what church is for. Church is God's house where we come to hear His Word. We know what kinds of things Jesus talked about in the temple because the Bible is full of things that Jesus talked about.

Jesus told the people that He is the Son of God who came to save them. Jesus told them that they're not saved by anything they did for God, but by faith in Him and what He came to do for them. Jesus told them that they were to obey God's Law, and that such obedience was a fruit of faith. Jesus taught the people about His, about God's, love and mercy and forgiveness. Jesus taught them about His, about God's, help and guidance in life. Jesus taught them that by faith in Him they were going to heaven (Jn. 14:19)

Jesus reminds us why we come to church. We come here, first and foremost, to pray, to praise God, and to hear His Word. May this always be so for all of us.

How blest are they who hear God's Word And keep and heed what they have heard!
They wisdom daily gather;
Their light shines brighter day by day, And while they tread life's weary way,
They have the oil of gladness To soothe their pain and sadness.

God's Word a treasure is to me, Through sorrow's night my sun shall be,
The shield of faith in battle.
The Father's hand hath written there My title as His child and heir,
"The kingdom's thine forever." That promise faileth never. Amen.