

## Sermon Transcript for Sunday August 8, 2021

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

All right. So we have Jesus in an unusual state of mind here. We have Him weeping for Jerusalem, and then we have Him casting out the money changers from the temple. So, we're going to figure out what is going on here and kind of see what we're to learn.

So, Jesus is riding in on a donkey. This is Palm Sunday. So, this is the end of His ministry. He is preparing for the sacrifice to be made on the cross. He is preparing to shed His blood for the forgiveness of the people. In other words, the time of the promise of the Messiah is at hand. This is the fulfillment of everything that has gone on before, and it is the fulfillment of all of our hope for the future. It is now when Christ is going to be chosen as the sacrificial lamb, and then sacrificed on that Passover day and then raised again three days later for our salvation.

And so He's riding into Jerusalem and everybody's singing the praises. "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." And in the midst of all of this He stops, and He weeps for the city, even though all of these people are praising His name, He still weeps because He understands that they do not understand what is going on, that the people have failed to live up to the promises that God has declared already in Jeremiah's day.

Jeremiah has the unique distinction of being the prophet, who actually saw his prophecies fulfilled, who actually saw the destruction of Jerusalem as he prophesied. And he was not well-liked because of it. He was thrown into a cistern at one point. He was ridiculed. He was called a false prophet. And yet he preaches the truth because the time of both Jesus and Jeremiah was a time where people thought they were obeying the Word of God. They looked very moral. They looked like good people. But the problem of both times was that they were completely thinking that they were righteous and holy and good because of what they had done.

Now, from a human perspective, it makes sense. I'm either good or bad based on what I've done. I can look at my life and I can say, "Well, I've done this and that and the other thing, and that makes me either good or bad, or at least more good than bad, hopefully when it comes right down to it." But the reality of the fact of the matter is, is that because we are born sinful, we have original sin. And because we cannot obey the Word of God to perfection, which is what God demands, if we look to claim to be a good person based upon what we have done, we all fall short, and we have nothing left to claim except repentance.

Now that was always offered in Israel. And that was always God's desire is that all would come to repent of their sin and to trust in the grace and mercy of God. Because if they only trusted in their own acts, the only thing that they had to face was the wrath of God. As do we. If we look to our own actions, the only thing we have to face is the wrath of God. And He would be justified in sharing that wrath with us, which is a frightening proposition when it comes right down to it.

And that is why Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. Because the teachers of the day were teaching the people that as long as you follow the Ten Commandments and every other rule that we've added in addition to the Ten Commandments, if you act properly, then you are righteous before God. And in Jeremiah's day, they were saying, "The temple of the Lord. We have the temple. It's in the center of the city. It's there. Sacrifices are being offered. Just because it's there, we know God loves us." Which is true, God does love them, but just because it's there, we are righteous, and we don't need to worry about anything.

And so how many people do you know who will say, "Well, I can do whatever I want during the week. I always find forgiveness on Sunday morning." Now we might not be that crass in saying that ourselves. However, how often are we tempted by the sins of this world to do what feels like we want done, knowing that it's wrong because we know that "we got grace on Sunday morning." I don't like to think that I act that way. Yes, I don't like to think that I act that way, but that is indeed how I act. There are things that I do that I know are wrong. I'm human. I get frustrated. I get mad. I want my own comfort and peace. And really what is the world looking for? They are looking for peace. We're looking for this ability to just feel good about ourselves and to be at peace.

But what does Jesus say, "If they had known this day the things that make for peace." You see, if I look to my behavior, I don't find peace in that. I find that maybe I've done... I'd like to think that I've done more good than bad. Notice I say, I like to think that. The reality is, if I am honest with the way Jesus reads the Ten Commandments, it's not just my actions, but it's also my words, which are much harder to control than my actions. And then I go even deeper into my thoughts, which are impossible to control. So, if I go by the standard that Jesus says, not only do I have to act properly so that everybody can see how wonderful a person I am, I also have to speak properly, even in the quiet times, even when nobody else can hear me, when I'm in my car by myself. You know what I'm talking about. And then not only my words, but my thoughts. Those thoughts had come unbidden into my brain that I don't even know where they come from, but I know they're wrong. But they come anyway. There's no peace in looking to my behavior, into my words, into my thoughts because all they do is honestly condemn me.

So what is the peace? The peace comes from the visitation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Him becoming flesh and dwelling among us, living that life of perfection that we have no hope of attaining, and then giving that perfection to us as a gift. Now there is peace. I am saved by grace, not by any works that I do, not by anything that I have performed, not because I've been good enough. But because God was perfect in His Son, Jesus Christ and He gives it to me, free and clear.

I mean so much so that we have so much peace in our lives that we need not even fear death itself. That even death is nothing to be afraid, because when we die, we will face our maker and we will face our maker on the judgment day. Now I don't know about you, but judgment day sounds like a frightening day, quite frankly. However, let us remember where our sins are for those who believe. Remember that God has promised that He throws our sins into the sea of forgetfulness, that He casts our sins away from us, away from Him as far as the east is from the west cosmically, not globally. So, there is no meeting of east and west. There is no depth of the ocean that He will dredge up again and pull up our sins. So, when we stand before our maker on the judgment day, He looks at us and He forgets that we've done anything wrong. The God who knows all things forgets for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ.

And so we stand before the maker, we stand in the judgment and God looks at us and He says, "What gives you the right to enter into the kingdom of heaven?" Absolutely nothing except Jesus died for me. And I put my hope... All of my eggs are in that one basket. And God steps aside and says, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And I enter into the kingdom. And we don't need to fear death. What kind of peace do we have as a result of that? That is a peace which surpasses all understanding. That is the peace that the world out there would love to have but cannot without recognizing Christ as their Savior.

And in Jeremiah, he was talking to the people, and he was saying, "Look, if you would just listen to my word, it's not that if they would have obeyed God and done the Ten Commandments properly, then He would let

them stay. The problem was they didn't believe that God was going to save them. They believed that they needed to appear righteous at the very least. And so they would worship other gods and they would murder and they would lie and they would steal. And yet they would claim to be righteous because they lived up to the technicalities of the Commandments. And yet they would hate their brother. They would not give when that was necessary. They would hide their actions, but they looked good from an outsider's perspective.

We know there is nothing good within us, but we pray that God would shine through us and in us. That's what He calls us to do. We are called to do good works. We are called to serve God in truth and purity. We are called to remember His graciousness. But not because we have to and if we don't, God's going to judge us. We're called to live in righteousness because God has given us His righteousness by faith. And then, because we have been given a gift, now that we have peace, we can then seek to serve and to be kind and generous and to share the Word of God and the peace which surpasses all understanding with our friends and our neighbors and our coworkers and the person in line with us and the person we sit next to on the bus or the train or the airplane or wherever we might be or in the waiting room at the DMV or wherever it might be. We pray that God would give us an opportunity to share the peace that was given to us by the visitation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

That was what was lacking in the temple of Jesus' day. They had set up the booths in the courtyard of the Gentiles. So the temple had the courtyard of the Gentiles. It was sort of the lowest rung. And then there was a courtyard where the women could go, Jewish women. And then there was a courtyard where the Jewish men could go. And then there was an area where the priests could go. And then, of course there was the most exclusive area where only the high priests could go once a year, that Holy of Holies. And so they made this outside ring as a place where they could exchange money and prepare for the sacrifices and all these bleeding lambs and everything, forgetting the God desired for all people, even the Gentiles who are in the outer court, that God desires for them to know the peace that surpasses all understanding.

So, it is our calling to share the peace of God with all people, all that we come in contact with because Christ has visited us and adopted us as His children. And therefore, we are at peace. And we do not need to be afraid to share that peace with one another, not just here, but with everybody out there, everybody that we come in contact with, that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding abides with us and is shared with those around us unto life everlasting. Amen.