

In the Name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and may our Lord and Savior sanctify you in the truth, for His word is truth. Amen

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity (2022)

You Must Know Christ to Know True Peace

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“And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept 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.” (Luke 19:41–42, ESV)

The Old Testament people would greet each other by saying שלום “Shalom,” peace and prosperity be yours. The Greeks would greet each other, saying ειρήνην “Eirene” peace, hoping also that peace and prosperity would be granted to others. But today, we seldom greet each other with the word peace, and we are the poorer for it. In sending out the seventy-two, our Lord Jesus gave them this instruction, whenever they entered a house they were to say, ***‘Peace be to this house!’ (Luke 10:5, ESV)*** This is the peace of the Benediction, *“The Lord look upon you with favor, and give you peace.”* This is the peace offered by Christ and the peace sought after by His disciples.

Our German forefathers, disciples of Christ and fledgling Lutherans, thought they had made peace with the world when in 1555 their Lutheran faith was recognized by king Ferdinand I as a legitimate Christian religion at the Peace of Augsburg. But they soon found that this peace was not lasting as the Thirty Years War tore apart the German countryside targeting Lutherans because of their faith. Then in 1648 the Peace of Westphalia established full protection for all religious minorities in Europe, and finally, many Lutherans thought that peace had come to their churches, only to once again have that peace overruled by government authority. Again they find themselves persecuted and the peace they seek is once again crushed. However, the faithful always desire true peace, that peace promised them by Christ when He said, ***“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.”*** But the peace He promises is not the peace of the world. Indeed, He told us the peace He gives is, ***“Not as the world gives.” (John 14:27, ESV)*** The history of world shows it has no lasting peace to offer because of ***“the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.” (Ephesians 2:2, ESV)*** This ***“prince of the power of the air”*** is Satan, who seeks to destroy peace, especially peace within the Church of God. Taking advantage of the natural inclination of the flesh to rule over others, he creates turmoil and chaos where peace should be found.

Such is the turmoil and chaos within God’s Church in the days of Jesus. Driven by greed, a desire for celebrity recognition, and control over the people, the leaders of the Temple had placed themselves and their selfish desires over the people. Ruling by coercion and requiring strict adherence to the Law they forgot that God desired mercy and not sacrifice. Because of their unfaithfulness, God had allowed His people to be conquered and ruled by pagans. Yes, the people could worship in the Temple, but the Temple itself had been turned into ***“a den of robbers.” (Luke 19:46, ESV)*** As the Temple rulers sought more and more wealth to live the good life, a life not available to the common people, the people came to know God less and less.

Guided by selfish motives, the rulers and the people had forgotten the promise of the Messiah. Therefore, when He who came bringing the peace of God, neither the rulers nor the people recognized Him. St. John reminds us, ***“The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the***

world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.” (John 1:9–11, ESV) Such is the world into which the Son of God came, not seeking peace, but bringing peace, “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.” (Philippians 4:7, ESV)

The Gospel Reading for today reveals our Lord Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, preparing to enter the city on the first day of the last week of His life on earth. On the road, riding on the back of a donkey, the people shower Him with praise, throwing palm branches and their cloaks before Him while shouting, **“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:38, ESV)** But their shouts of peace are quickly changed at the end of the week to **“Crucify, Crucify him,” (Luke 23:21 ESV)**. The peace they proclaimed was not long lasting.

Our Lord hears their voices and their words of peace and blessings knowing their words do not have the same meaning as His. He knows the peace they speak of will be short-lived. Therefore, He weeps for them knowing the calamity which is about to come upon them. Indeed, later in the week He says to them, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” (Matthew 23:37 ESV)** Our Lord weeps knowing that He and His heavenly Father have reached out to these people on many occasions only to be rejected. He knows they will crucify Him, the One sent by God to bring true peace upon His people, and by so doing, they will destroy the peace that is meant for them. So nearing the city our Lord cries out, **“Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.” (v. 42)**

Drawing nearer to the city, our Lord stops to weep over the city and in His words, we hear the words of the suffering servant, the cries of Moses as he blesses Israel, the voices of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea, all caught up in the sorrow of God for Israel. He weeps knowing the rejection and the destruction that awaits the beloved city of God. Thus, He chastise the people for not knowing or believing in the things that bring peace. His words are a call to repentance, a call to confess that they have walked away from God seeking the things of the world, living according to the corrupted nature of man and not the will of God.

His words remind us that throughout His ministry, everywhere He went He was met, not with peace, but with violence, hatred, and turmoil. He was mocked, threatened with death, and slandered while all along seeking only to bring peace, the peace of God to a world and people dying of sin. How ironic that the Son of God, whose only desire was to bring peace and joy to God’s people, was met with hostility, conflict, and confrontation. But is this not how He is received today? The world has not changed since the days of Jesus. It is still a place where Satan rules. Where he leads the people of this world, even those who say they are followers of Christ, to live lives of conflict, hostility, and confrontation. There are those who refuse to believe, who refuse to see the Son of God who is revealed in Holy Scripture and who refuse to see the God of Creation. Led by their corrupted flesh, they seek not peace but battle. Being antagonistic toward God’s Word of peace they become aggressors against God’s Church. But this aggression is not confined to atheist or agnostics or those who worship other gods. Such aggression can be found within the halls of God’s Church.

This is the aggression our Lord Jesus found in the Temple and with the Temple rulers. Claiming to be followers of the One true God, in practice they abused their faith and the faithful. Rather than follow the urgings of the Holy Spirit, their inner being listened to their flesh and their worldly desires. They had forgotten that they were to be servants to God’s people, therefore Jesus tells them, **“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (Matthew 23:12, ESV)** They had forgotten that as disciples of the Lord, they were

to live as one, servants one to another. Only by living as disciples of the Lord would they find true peace. But the scribes and the Pharisees were only concerned with jockeying for position, with receiving acclamations that showed they were greater spiritually and socially than others. Sadly, this attitude rubbed off on the people, leading them to seek the same type of recognition while forgetting God.

Although the people of Jerusalem were descendants of God's chosen people, although they had His holy Word recorded in Scripture, although they had His Temple in which to worship, and although they knew His commandments by heart, the people of Jerusalem were spiritually ignorant and bankrupt. Sadly, we see such unbelief threatening the Church today. Thus, our Lord continues to weep over those who reject His offer of forgiveness and salvation secured for them by His atoning sacrifice upon the Altar of the Cross, weeping over those seeking the temporal pleasures of the world and the foolishness of men.

The apostle Paul, a Pharisee, a man not of peace but of the Law, was convinced he had to destroy the fledgling Church of the followers of Christ. So he went about his task securing warrants for the arrest of these apostate Jews, warrants which would bring them to trial and justice before the court of the Sanhedrin. But instead of destroying the peace that Christ gave to His church, St. Paul fell under its blessings. Christ Jesus personally called Paul into the ministry of the Christian Church that His Gospel of Peace would be proclaimed throughout the world.

Brought to faith in Christ Jesus, St. Paul was eager to fulfill the Lord's command, but like Christ, he, too, was met with conflict, hostility, confrontation, hatred, and violence. Yet these things did not deter him from his calling to ***“Preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,” (1 Corinthians 1:23, ESV)*** His calling was to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who was crucified on the Altar of the Cross for the forgiveness of the sins of all men. The Holy Spirit had revealed to St. Paul that through such preaching peace would reign in the world for all who are called through that Gospel will be given the peace of God to know, ***“Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”*** and to know that ***“the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (1 Corinthians 1:24–25, ESV)***

Early in Divine Service, at the Service of the Word, we sing the Kyrie, *“In peace let us pray to the Lord.”* This is our cry for mercy, our cry for peace with the Lord. We do so, knowing that true peace comes to us through the incarnation of God's holy Son, Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection brought God's peace to all who believe. Peace is a gift from God brought to us through His gift of faith. We live in a hostile and angry world, a world filled with sin, death, and destruction. If we follow the way of the world there will never be peace in our life, either in this age or the age to come. Yet, God offers us a way to escape the turmoil, anger, and bitterness of the world by hearing the Gospel and being brought to faith, believing that His Son's death upon the Altar of the Cross has rescued us from sin, death, and the devil. Faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus brings the believer true peace.

Again, St. Paul reminds us that Christ is our peace, saying, ***“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14, ESV)*** Furthermore, he says, ***“Brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11, ESV)***

Those who live according to the flesh, according to the world cannot please God (2 Cor. 13:8), nor will they find true peace for they seek a worldly or external peace. Neither will the world experience an earthly peace as some believe, hoping for a golden age of peace for the Church on earth, a Church of universal conversion of Jews and the elimination of the Antichrist. Such an

earthly peace, a peaceful church is not found in Holy Scripture. The peace that is promised by our Lord Jesus Christ in His Gospel, is the peace that the Gospel brings. The peace of the forgiveness of sins, the peace of knowing we are children of God made so in the waters of Baptism, the peace which comes from believing in eternal life promised to all who believe in the God of peace and His holy Son who brings that peace. The peace, which is promised in Holy Scripture as St. Paul says, ***“Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1, ESV)***

Therefore, we cling to God’s Word which promises peace. The words of our Lord Jesus who said, ***“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, ESV)*** Again, the peace which comes from the word of Christ, ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (John 5:24, ESV)*** and the reiteration of our Lord’s words through the voice of St. Paul, who said, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1, ESV)*** Finally, we are reminded of the Spirit inspired words of St. John, ***“Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood” (Revelation 1:4–5, ESV)*** *True peace comes from knowing Jesus Christ.*

These are God’s words of peace, words of the end of hostility between man and God, words which create faith and bring peace that is everlasting. Words which show you Christ Jesus who gives you *True Peace*. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

May the Peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen