

Sermon Advent 1 2018

December 2, 2018

Luke 19:28-40

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. This morning we meditate on the Gospel Lesson, previously read.

As I think you all probably know from my preaching, I have shows that I periodically like to watch on TV or Netflix. Well, one of those shows that I have been watching is the version of Daredevil that's on Netflix. Now, if you aren't familiar with it, Daredevil is from a comic book and they turned it into a show a few years ago. However, the reason I bring this up because sometimes shows can touch on some quite theological themes. In particular, there was one episode of Daredevil that tied in three.

The first theme was a sense that the main character, Daredevil, had to do all of his fighting on his own. He had become convinced that as he cared for people and had connections to them, it was harmful to them because they could get hurt. It didn't matter that these friends were very capable in getting themselves in trouble, nor that they were just as dedicated to the cause of defeating the arch enemy as Daredevil, he was convinced he needed to separate himself from his friends as far as possible. In other words, he thought he had to fight his fight against his enemy on his own, and that meant he could and should do it without his friends.

The second theme was a conversation that the character had with another character who is a nun. As he was talking to the nun, he made it clear how he felt that the sinner in him, the one who wanted to pursue the punishing of wicked men was sinful and just a part of who he was. Furthermore, he said that some people are beyond the point of redemption. In other words, that people could never change.

The final theme came in the form of this character seeing taunting images of the archenemy. This taunting, while in the character's head, and clearly represented his own insecurities, this taunting brought those to the forefront. They pointed out these insecurities and made them even into accusations. The archenemy spoke them and drawing deeply on them continually crushed the main character.

So as I say this, you might be thinking, "Why is pastor telling me about a TV show and the struggles of the character in it?" Well this is for two reasons. The first is that I want you to see that there are theological things all around us. As we look at the stories on TV, in books, as we look at the occurrences of our everyday lives we can see

all over that there is a mark of the theological. We can see the marks that testify to the work of God all around us, the ways that He inserts the story of His creation of this world and its fall into sin. That's the first reason. The second is because these theological things fit so well into our theme for this week.

You see this is the first week of Advent, and as I tell you every year, this is that time of the Church Year when we are looking to the coming of the Lord. Of course, that looking is in light of the Lord's coming at the end of time in judgment—something we have one eye on because of the end of the Church year. Then we have another eye looking to His coming into this world at the first Christmas. In the middle we have this week. This weird reading that doesn't seem to fit with the season because it's the reading from Palm Sunday, from the Sunday before Jesus' death and resurrection.

And in that reading what do we see? Yes, we see Jesus riding into Jerusalem, we see Him riding to His death, but what do we see? We see Jesus, the King. We see the people crying out and saying, **“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”** Do you hear it there? Blessed is the King! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!! You see in Advent that's what we're looking at: we're looking at that King who's coming. That's what the word “advent” means, it means coming. So, here is Jesus the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

But did you see the next part? “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.” As you hear those words, words spoken right before the Lord's death, do they remind you of something? How about the words the angels sang at His birth? **“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”** Here is this King, the one who comes, the one who brings peace: peace on earth and peace in heaven! And I think you all know that need for peace. You know the turmoil that we experience on earth, you know the confession of Scripture that we are God's enemies because of our sin. And so you know the need for the King to come and bring peace in the midst of that.

But as you know that need, something I think that's good to remember is why this King needed to come, and why we speak in these terms about it. Remember that man when he was created, he was given dominion over the world. God brought the animals to him and he named those animals. He was the one who determined what they would be called. In doing that, Adam showed the dominion, the authority God was giving Him over his creation. But then what happened? Then Adam sinned and handed that

dominion, that authority over to the serpent, to the devil. And now what does the serpent do with that authority?

Look at the things that I mentioned from the show. I brought those up this week because of how well this fits with the evil one's activity. First of all the seclusion. You know how that is. When something happens in your life, the devil wants to seclude you. He wants to wall you off by yourself. Sometimes this happens by making you think that what has happened to you is so horrible no one would understand. And it's true they might not know the experience, but they can't understand unless you share with them. Or, maybe he wants you to think that others don't want you around. As Christians that is untenable for us. We can't not want others around. It's our duty to bear with them. Or maybe he wants you to think that you're best just working things out on your own. Whatever the motivation, he wants you separated.

Then there is temptation toward complacency. "People can't change. People are just who they are. Some people are just rotten ones and that's that!" This might be a temptation you feel about yourself because you have a particular sin you keep struggling with, or maybe it's tempting to think that about someone that you need to share your faith with. In any case, the devil wants you to think it's true.

Finally, there is that voice of accusation. You all know that. The devil likes to come and trick you into thinking that a particular sin isn't a big deal. He likes to convince you to just tell that one piece of gossip, just glance at that one woman, just lash out at that one car, just hold on to that anger one more day. He tells you that and says, "do it, it's not a big deal." And then when it's done, or when that once turns into again and again and again, he'll turn on you and accuse you. Like when a dog goes to the bathroom in the house he'll take you and point out what you have done and remind you of just how terrible and worthless you are.

You see all of this just points to this conflict, this lack of peace that we have. But that is this joy of Advent. There is coming a King into the world who takes all of that conflict upon Himself and bears it in His cross. He is the One secluded on the cross, so that you may be joined to the fellowship and the joy of His in people in His body, the Church. He is the One who takes sin and crucifies it so that it is dealt with and buried. This means that by His resurrection, even the worst of all sinners has hope that there is life in the midst of His death. In other words, by His resurrection, by your union with that resurrection in baptism, now you are not identified by that sin, but with the life of Christ, with a way freed from the chains and the burdens of sin. And finally it means

that the finger of accusation is pointed at Him instead of you. Do you deserve ridicule and shame for your sin? Yes you do. But in His love, God has found you to be of infinite worth, and so has poured out all His anger at sin on Jesus. Now He is the one with the finger of John pointed at Him, saying “behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” All of this, Christian, for you.

In fact, there is something that I found especially comforting as I was studying this passage this year. As Luke has organized his gospel under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he has done so that just before what we read this morning is the parable of the Tin Minas—a parable comparable to the Ten Talents. However, Luke makes a point of emphasis about the King in the parable. To that point the last thing the King says is this: **“But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.”** This King in the parable is God. Jesus is making a clear point as to what will happen to His enemies. They will be slaughtered before Him. Who are those enemies? Your sin, your death, the devil, the real enemies will be slaughtered before the King. Thanks be to that King!

And as we say that, then we see how the disciples cried out. We see how they cried out in their praise, and if they hadn’t even the stones would. How can we not join in that praise for our coming King! **“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”** Or as we’ll be joining together in the Sanctus later in the liturgy, “Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.” Blessed is He, and blessed are we for He comes to us in that power to save us from our sin, from death, and from the devil who would seclude, attack, and accuse us. Amen.