

August 8, 2010
Trinity 10
Luke 19:41-48
“Weeping over Sin”
Fort McCoy, WI

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

Why does our Savior weep? He does not weep for pride or scorn. He does not weep in frustration or despair. He does not weep to think of the torture He will endure.

As He enters into Jerusalem to lay down His life on the cross, He weeps in mourning. Many of those whom He loves will endure needless suffering and death. He weeps for the people of Jerusalem. He goes to die for them, to pay for their sins, to reconcile them to His Father. But they choose their own way, their own gods. They reject the Lord in their flesh. His visitation and peace are wasted on them for they choose war. And they will suffer terribly in the siege to come. But what the Romans do to them - as bad as it is, and it is bad as anything mankind has ever known - cannot compare to what Hell has in store.

Repent. Jerusalem is a warning. Not everyone who says, **“Lord, Lord,”** will enter into the kingdom of heaven. It sounds most unChristian to say it, but not everyone who is baptized will be saved. Hitler was baptized. So was Stalin. So was Judas. Caiaphas and all the Sadducees were circumcised. It is possible to deny the faith, to turn away, either in a conscience decision for power and evil, or by a slow seduction to sin and a lackadaisical approach to faith.

Just because you were confirmed, or your dad read the Bible everyday, or you had a great pastor once, does not mean you are in the club. You have vowed to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from the faith. We vainly think, **“I would die for God, for orthodoxy. I would never deny the Lord and burn incense to Caesar. But don't ask me to make a financial sacrifice. Don't**

ask me to give up the benefits of my dead husband's pension and marry the man I am living with, because that would mean giving up income, and surely the Lord would understand sin for the sake of money, wouldn't he? Isn't the Lord big on making as much money as possible and knows that if it is for money then sins don't really count? He wouldn't ask us to be inconvenienced, would He? All that rot at confirmation was simply rhetoric, the inflated language of pretend patriots. You can't expect us to actually suffer something. Isn't Christianity about being nice to one another, keeping up appearances, and promoting our culture?"

Such thinking betrays who and what is really our god. You cannot serve two gods. You cannot serve God and mammon. Repent. Consider Jerusalem at the hand of the Romans. Be warned and on guard.

And yet, Jerusalem's failures and rejection did not stop our Lord. Our Lord weeps not from wrath but from love. And even though it seems futile, almost wasteful, for Our Lord to go to the cross for those who hate Him, who will not have Him, He goes. Because He loves them. He is like the mother of a rebellious teenage daughter. The daughter slams her door, yells, **"I hate you,"** and insults the mother. But the mother still makes her daughter's favorite dinner.

He goes to cleanse the Temple, to drive out the money changers, to make room for the Gentiles, to restore the Temple as a place where God meets His people in grace rather than a place where men vainly try to buy God's favor. He is like the mother flushing the pot down the toilet even though He knows the daughter can get more.

Unlike our earthly, long-suffering mothers, His patience is perfect and without end. He does not grow weary or angry. His love never slackens. He keeps on because He loves us and because He loves His Father and desires to fulfill His Father's will.

It is true that sinful men, like Adolf Hitler or Judas, can reject their baptisms. But it is also true that proud, sinful men like Peter, David, or Nebuchadnezzar can be brought back to grace. In the case of evil men who choose their own way, the fault is not baptism but in the willful decisions of men. In the case of Peter and company the power is with Baptism. What Peter forgot, the Lord remembered. Baptism is not a license to sin. Having been baptized or confirmed warrants no favor with God apart from faith. What Baptism gives is forgiveness of sins and faith. We do not stand in the devil's living room, as his invited guest, wink and say, **“No problem, friends. The devil can't hurt me. I am baptized. I can commit adultery, steal, lie, smoke dope, get drunk, and fight with immunity.”** That is a lie.

But we do stand in our own living rooms or in our work places or in city hall and say, **“The devil can't hurt me. I've sinned. I've done terrible things. And to some degree, I've invited the devil here with my sins. I've opened the door. I've played with fire. But God is merciful. Jesus died for me. I am baptized and I belong to God. The devil can roar all he wants, he can't really hurt me. Because Jesus has overcome him and risen from the dead. The resurrected Lord brought Peter back. He forgave his sins. He comforted and encouraged him in the breaking of the bread. He does the same for me. I am baptized and safe. He feeds me and I am safe. He forgives me and gives me the strength to carry on.”**

Why does our Savior weep? He weeps for those He loves. He weeps for the lost and also for the sorrows of the faithful. That sorrow does not stop Him. It does render Him impotent. He endures. He presses on. He goes to the cross. Because many in Jerusalem were lost, they would not have Him. But not all were lost. Peter was there. Mary. Nicodemus. Zachariah. Saul. And you, your parents, your children, your brothers and sisters around you today. He goes for them, to save them, to open heaven for free to all believers, to give power and authority to baptism, to give substance and life to the Holy Communion.

The Temple is now clean. The Lord is risen and weeps no more. He has what He came for: you. You are forgiven, faithful by Divine decree and promise. Now He welcomes you again to His table that you would have forgiveness for yesterday, strength for today, and hope for tomorrow, and your presences fills the Savior with joy.

In ✠ Jesus' Name. Amen.