

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity  
25 August, Anno Domini 2019  
St. Luke 19:41-48  
Pr. Kurt Ulmer

In the Name of the Father and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Is peace actually possible in this world? It sounds nice. Everyone wants it and talks about it. I know everyone in this room wants peace. Life is so hectic and chaotic, scrambling from one obligation and appointment to another, putting out fires at home, at work, at school, and on the playground. We strain against the weaknesses of our own flesh - addictions, sicknesses and pains, anxiety, depression, lust, anger, fear. We solve one problem only to have ten others pop up to take its place. We stay up late and get up early in a desperate attempt to put a little check mark next to all the things that we had to do that day to keep the world, at least our own and probably everyone else's, from falling apart. We flip on the TV looking for some peace only to be bombarded with bad traffic reports, more people murdered, more corruption, more scamming, more perversity, more things you just have to have. Social media is really nothing more than an IV drip of unrest that we have largely become addicted to. "I love it, but I hate it." And with all that, even our nights, times when we should be able to lay our heads on our pillows and rest are anything but restful. The children wake up. "I can't get to sleep because I'm worried about this person or that issue. My dreams are depressing and terrifying."

The more and more we look around, the more we come to the conclusion that peace is just not something we will ever know. The world is too broken. People are too broken. I'm too broken. Every good that comes our way seems to be quickly overwhelmed and replaced by more problems. For all our organizing and exercising and researching and medicating, the simple fact remains - we're still frazzled, empty, confused, in a constant state of eeking by hoping that tomorrow will be better (knowing that it won't), and plodding on aimlessly toward death.

Certainly the world is more than happy to offer you things that come with the promise of peace. "If you have/do/buy x,y, or z you'll be a good parent, spouse, neighbor, employee, employer, child." Inevitably, the peace that the world offers comes at a price that you have to pay and, mysteriously, the price is always changing. And if you don't find the peace as promised, there's something wrong with you. My guess is that many of you have in the past or maybe even right now,

have given up on having peace. “That’s my allotment in life. I’m just not going to have any peace. Maybe when I die...maybe.”

It’s absolutely true, you won’t find real peace in this world. Jesus said “In the world you will have tribulation.” Nothing the world has, nothing, can bring you peace. That’s because true peace, the kind that we all long for, requires stability. It requires something good that is unchanging. And there’s nothing like that in the world. People, health, houses, emotions, beauty, wealth, jobs, governments, good works, good intentions - all of it is shiftless and unreliable. They can all be swept away in a moment. The best friends can become the most bitter enemies. Peaceful governments can fall to oppressive tyrants. Strong, healthy bodies can contract inexplicable and incurable diseases and waste away to nothing. Lucrative jobs can be lost. Economies can crash over night or identity thieves can strike sweeping away life’s savings in the blink of an eye. Good reputations can be destroyed by a single accusation, true or not.

All the world has to offer is tribulation. It doesn’t matter where you look or how hard you try, nothing in all of creation is even remotely capable of bringing you peace because all of it is just as fleeting as your own life. Ultimately it boils down to the fact that the world can’t confront and overcome death because the death is what the world loves and embraces. The world breathes death. It breathes defiance of the God of life. Its mind is the mind of the prince of death, the one who first rebelled against God and now knows nothing but hatred for God. The world doesn’t want peace. It hates peace because it hates the God of peace.

That is why Jesus weeps as He enters what the city of peace. That is why Jesus’ anger boils over in His Father’s house. In the midst of this world of death and chaos and unrest there is peace. God has provided peace for sinners. Into the darkness of our world of death and darkness and hopelessness the Son of God descended, not as an angel or a fearsome deity, but as a man. He wrapped Himself in human flesh, humbling Himself to be our servant and swallow up our death by enduring it for us. He burst open the sealed and guarded grave. The Word of God took on flesh so that we might see God and not be afraid. Jesus of Nazareth came to give that very peace that the world cannot give. He came to loose death’s icy grip on you. He came to take your sin and your guilt and claim it as His own so that God’s wrath and judgment would fall to Him. Jesus, God in the flesh, crucified and now risen, your Savior, seated far above all heavens is your peace. He is the Father’s promise that your destruction isn’t what He wants. The peace you need is the Jesus of flesh and blood who has reconciled you to God, who has made peace between God and man through His cross. The peace you need is as

close as your Baptism which bears Jesus' own promise that whoever believes and is baptized will be saved from sin, death, and the unrest of this world. No matter how chaotic or painful your life is, no matter how far into the terrors of hell your guilt has dragged you, there is peace because Christ has won the victory. And He would share that victory with you. That's why Jesus has sent forth his called ministers into the world to proclaim this peace to you, to declare to you that your sins are forgiven, to actually heal by His Word the deep and deadly wounds that sin and death have inflicted upon you, to deliver you from the vain and condemning notion that you either can or must merit reconciliation with Him by your efforts and keeping of the Law. Jesus has cast down Satan under your feet and overcome the world. The world with all its vaunted pleasure, mammon, and fame are nothing.

But sinful man doesn't recognize the one who makes for peace because we are too in love with this world and this life. Our minds are too set on earthly, fleshly things, including and chiefly, ourselves. We chase after them hoping that this time will be different, that this time those earthly pleasures and comforts will finally soothe our consciences. And they may...but only for a moment. The joy they bring is vapid. As quickly as it came, it will disappear because they are powerless against death. But during those brief moments, the damage will have been done. Our eyes will have been turned away from God, turned away from Jesus, turned away from salvation and we will be left empty again, alone, afraid, restless.

One more indulgence. One more day without the promises of Christ in our ears. All too often we turn away from the peace that Jesus brings in Word and Sacrament. Too often we turn His house, the place of His gracious presence, into a den of robbers where we try to buy and sell salvation, where we try to offer peace through hard work and good intentions. Too often, God's visitation is despised so that we might instead indulge the desires of our flesh. Too often the God who comes in humility and mercy is despised for something more glamorous, more pleasing to the eye, more exciting or fun. But, dear children of God, these are nothing more than smoke and mirrors, a flashy light show designed to dull your senses and your conscience so that the humble things of God are a stumbling block to you and, like Jerusalem, you no longer recognize the day of the visitation of your Lord and Savior.

Today is that day. Today is the day your Lord rides to you humbly seated on the Word of God to bring you peace, to take away your sins. He comes to serve you in His Father's house, your Father's house, to hear your cries for help, to bind up your wounds, and to pour out to you the eternal peace of His resurrection. His

peace and His promises do not change. He doesn't take them away from you or change His mind. You may have doubts, you may waiver, but the promises of God will never pass away. Peace is exactly what Christ came to bring because there is no peace anywhere else. He alone has defeated death. He alone has opened the gates of eternal life to sinners. He alone has born God's wrath against sin. Upon our Lord Jesus is the chastisement that brought us peace and now that peace is given to you to hear and to feast on. This alone, the peace of the Lord, is the only peace that endures forever, the only peace that pushes back the relentless assaults of the world, the peace that can bring rest to wearied consciences seeking to make peace with God.

And while this world will most certainly continue until the day of our Lord's return, it will continue not one day past that for God's children. On that glorious day, all those who have received Christ by faith will enter the eternal rest of God where consciences are never again disturbed, where disease and death are never again able to touch you, where all anger and envy and strife are put away. And that is the peace that Christ wants you to have now - the peace that is alone in Him, because He has prepared the way for you and holds that peace in safety at the right hand of God where each and every day He breathes out His peace upon you as you recall the promises of your Baptism, as you call upon your heavenly Father in prayer, as you hear and meditate on His Word. May the peace of Jesus Christ be yours today and always.

In the Name of +Jesus.