

## ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Luke 19:41-48 (Jeremiah 7:1-7)

*Don't take the Son for granted.*

David Hume was a Scottish philosopher, and what one might call a skeptic. He is famous for saying, "That the sun will not rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, that it will rise."

Think about it. The fact that the sun has risen every day of your life is hardly proof it must rise tomorrow. Intuition, not logic, tells you that, because the sun has always risen, it will surely tomorrow rise. While Hume probably wouldn't bet against its rising, he makes clear that its rising isn't a given.

A similar thing often happens with regard to God's judgment. In our sin, we assume, "God's judgment hasn't caught up with me thus far, so it surely won't catch me tomorrow." No assumption could be more asinine, not to mention dangerous, because we're dealing, not merely with the sun in the sky, but the very Son of God from heaven.

If ever there was a city worth preserving, it was Jerusalem, a living, breathing museum of the mighty works of God. It was the capital of the Promised Land, a sparkle in Abraham's eye and a jewel in David's crown, the seat of Solomon's wisdom and the Josiah's reformation. How many bones of how many prophets and kings rested within her boundaries? Countless for sure. How many wonderful words of God and comforting promises hadn't been spoken to her? Countless for sure. No city in all the world throughout all time could compare with this Jerusalem, the city of David and habitation of the Most High. If ever there was a city worth preserving, it was Jerusalem.

What are Jimmy Town, Tommy Town, Hemlock, Freeland, Merrill, and Saginaw compared to this city on a hill in our text, ancient as God's promise of offspring, yet current as the Savior at her gates? There is warning for us in this, because Jesus weeps, not, like a pilgrim, for joy at seeing her, but rather in sorrow, for she will be destroyed. Why? For her sin, and not just for any sin, but for the root of every sin, all the way back to Eden: for her failure to receive the Word through faith.

Now let's not think that the pews weren't packed in the temple. Jesus no doubt walked through a crowd to overturn tables. No, this was as religious an age as any in Israel's history. In fact, for all accounts and purposes, from outward appearance, this was the heyday of the Jewish faith. The seminaries were churning out gifted theologians. The Scriptures were being studied in the synagogue. The traditions were being kept. There wasn't a famine of the Word. There was plenty of Word to go around. It was where it was going that was the problem. It wasn't being taken to heart, because, if it were, Christ would have found a happy home there. Hearing God's Word and taking Him at His Word are two different things completely. God doesn't want religious people. God wants Christians, and there is no Christian where there is no Christ.

How often aren't we too like those in the Old Testament lesson, religious people with little room for the Christ who cramps our lifestyle. *"The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,*

*the temple of the Lord,*” we reassure ourselves. And so God’s house and His Word become, not a forgiveness factory at the foot of the cross, but a sort of rabbit’s foot. We sing a hymn for good luck. We take some bread and wine for good luck. We set a Bible on the table for good luck. We say a prayer here for good luck. And we convince ourselves that God must be happy with our lip service. We are at peace in our confusion, but not at peace in Christ.

*“If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.”* Church was full, but Jesus was still standing alone. These people were religious, but they were no Christians. How frightening that the same might be said of ourselves.

There is no guarantee the sun will rise tomorrow. We might well be in for some dark days. But, even more, there is no guarantee that God’s judgment won’t come tomorrow. And if it does, where will you stand in that darkest day of all? What will you do when your sins catch up to you? How will you bear it when the things you’ve hidden so carefully are set before the eyes of all, shouted for all to hear? How will you look into the eyes of your weeping Savior and explain to Him that you took His grace, but took it only for granted? Not one stone was left upon another in Jerusalem. What will be left of Jimmy Town. That was a lot of work wasted on the bell tower if we have no plans to repent.

Speaking of the bell tower, we had a funeral this last Monday. As is the custom, we tolled the bells afterward. When I got back from the committal, I was talking to the ladies at the meal and they mentioned all the work on the bell tower. Then I realized what we’d done. Without warning, we’d rung the bells while they were working there. I guess you could say they got their bell rung. I went out and apologized. They laughed, and understood, and said it woke them up. There’s a lesson for us in this. God’s judgment comes like the ringing of those bells. It is unexpected and when it comes you can’t miss it. Don’t wait to get your bell rung. Wake up now.

Religious people may wink at lust, but Christians don’t. God’s judgment is a blink away. Religious people may wink at anger, but Christians don’t. God’s judgment is a blink away. Religious people may wink at greed, but Christians don’t. God’s judgment is a blink away. Religious people may wink at self-centeredness, but Christians don’t. God’s judgment is a blink away. Religious people may wink at a filthy tongue, but Christians don’t. God’s judgment is a blink away. Religious people may wink at second opinions on God’s clear Word, but Christians don’t. God’s judgment is a blink away. Religious people may wink at youthful indiscretion, but Christians don’t. God’s judgment is a blink away. Religious people may wink at gossip and slander, but Christians don’t. God’s judgment is a blink away. God’s judgment is a blink away, so you’d better watch your winking. You’d hate to be caught with your eyes closed, wouldn’t you? It’s easy to see the error of our ways from the jail cell or the gallows, but by then it is too late. Don’t wait for the verdict to admit the crime. Flee to the cross for pardon while you can.

Luther commented, “If God were to punish us immediately when we deserve it, none of us would reach the age of seven.” St. Peter put it this way, *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”* Everyone includes you.

No mind can fathom the love of our Jesus. He stands outside Jerusalem and weeps because she's rejected Him. His time with her will end almost as soon as it begins, with the banging of a hammer and cries of pain. Then darkness will come. The heavens will thunder their judgment. The temple veil, the rabbit's foot of this religious people, will be torn in two, and a few decades later not a stone will remain unturned. Jesus stands outside Jerusalem and weeps, because He knows this will happen, and yet He goes down through her gates to die, and from the pulpit to which He they'd fasten, Him cried, *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*

Jesus stands at the gates and weeps. Whether or not we'll have Him, He is determined to give Himself for us. And He did. And He does. And He longs for us to turn His tears from sorrow to joy, *"for there is more rejoicing in heaven over one who repents than over ninety-nine who need no repentance."*

There is no famine of His Word here. There's plenty to go around. The issue is where that Word goes. Let it go to your heart, and Jesus won't merely fix the place up, He'll tear it down and build His temple, not as a rabbit's foot for this life, but as a guarantee of the life to come. The sun may rise tomorrow, but that doesn't make you right with the Son. God's judgment has not come yet, but that doesn't mean it won't come tomorrow. The good news is that, raised to new life with the risen Son, you can be ready. Don't take the Son for granted. Amen.