

Peace Through Christ
Luke 19:41-44

As our Lord humbly rode on that donkey colt down the hill from the Mount of Olives and onto the streets of Jerusalem, it was as He tells us here in these words of our passage, one of the most important days of His "visitation". And that is a very meaningful phrase within these scriptures, "The Day of His Visitation", that moment in time when our loving and creator God steps into the matters of human history and brings about changes that had never taken place before.

And yes, there were other occasions of Him stepping into human history. And yes, there will be more, especially in His "Day of Visitation" at the end of days.

But here, on this occasion of this "Visitation", our Lord was especially grieved. And from the words He used, we can see that this City, Jerusalem, was more than just a "place" where people lived and worked, and far more meaningful to the Lord Jesus personally.

It was, in one sense, the place where God had chosen to be His Home, the place of His Temple. But even beyond that, this City, Jerusalem, and its people, was a place and a people where His intimate love had found a special resting place.

And yes, it was that way then, in that day, and it is still that way today. Jerusalem is ever and always very, very special to our Lord and we need always to know that.

And so, He, within these words of our scripture passage voices His grief for this very special place and its very special people that He has a deep and intimate love for.

Listen carefully to these words of our Lord and we'll talk about them. Here given in Luke chapter 19, beginning in verse 41.

⁴¹ Now as He (the Lord Jesus) drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,
⁴² saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.
⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will

not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:41-44)

Some seven hundred years before this day that we read about here in these words, the Holy Spirit spoke through the Prophet Isaiah, saying of Jesus that He would be "a Man of Sorrows and full of grief". And so He was!

And the evidence of His sorrow can be clearly seen all through the days of His ministry among men, as spoken about here as He wept for His beloved city Jerusalem.

Though His heart and soul were always truly at peace within Him, these scriptures seldom, if ever, speak about the Lord Jesus laughing or being otherwise gleeful. Instead, most all of His days seemed to be filled with focused ministry, carrying forward the very intentional plans of God His father. And on at least two occasions, we find Him weeping in grief, His tender heart opened wide before us that we might see the sorrows that were present within Him, sorrows not only as a man might grieve for His friends, but also the deeply felt sorrows that a loving Father would have for His beloved children who are lost and suffering. And also, even beyond that, the sorrows that a loving husband would feel as he would see his beloved bride wandering astray from his love.

But may I suggest that the sorrows that Jesus felt went even beyond those that are common to men, Jesus felt sorrows that only the Almighty God could feel, as He would look beyond the immediate moment, on into the days and events that lay ahead, difficult days, not only for Himself, but especially for all the precious souls that He had come to seek and to save.

And His words of sorrow expressed a lament for the rejection He knew He would receive as He would offer grace and mercy and peace to a people that He would call His beloved children, a rejection that would not only bring about the destruction of Jerusalem, but would also bring about eternal damnation for all those who would refuse to receive Him.

How painful it must have been for Him! He had come to His own, to bring peace, joy and eternal life to them. But as we are told in these scriptures, His own received Him not! Yes, a few did. But so many, many more would not and they would be lost, in eternal torment.

Consider for a moment, the measure to which you and I would sorrow for the loss of just one of our beloved children, our love being only a shadow of God's love. And then consider the vast and profound measure of love that fills God's heart. And then consider that He knew ahead of time how many, many thousands, millions, even billions of dearly beloved people would, to their own great loss refuse and reject Him, and many, many of them frivolously so. The suffering that took place in the heart of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit was immeasurable and beyond our comprehension.

I must tell you that I have attempted to imagine that grief that took place there in the Kingdom of God, and especially the grief in the heart of God the Father as our sins would soon be placed upon the back of His dear Son Jesus. And then as Jesus would suffer and die there on the cross, even as all the while the people would still be rejecting Him. I know that the very fabric of heaven must have been overwhelmed and ripped open as our loving God the Father cried out across the heavens with unimaginable grief.

And here, as Jesus was beginning His final entrance into His beloved Jerusalem, the grief in His heart was already beginning to well up within Him.

But then also, with all these things being said, with all the immediate and impending grief that Jesus was experiencing, we must understand and accept that this had been understood and accepted all along, from the beginning, from even before the foundations of the earth were laid.

Folks, you have heard it said often that nothing ever takes God by surprise, and that is true, so very true. There is nothing in the past, present or future that God does not already fully know about, no matter how much suffering it might cause in Him. And though He knew all that was to take place, still He loves us.

And the words of John 3:16 are our spoken evidence of that vast love and affection that God has for His grievous children. Even knowing all that would come to pass, the sin in our hearts, our rejection of His Son and all that He would have to do to overcome our sin, God still loved us so much that He would go ahead and follow through with our salvation.

And so we have His words in John 3:16 telling us that, as our heavenly Father, He loved us so much that He was willing to send His only Begotten Son into this world to die to save us from our sins. And whoever would believe in Him and receive

Him would not perish, but have everlasting life. An indescribably wonderful and blessed free gift.

And now here in these words that we have before us today, we see God's great and loving grace toward us beginning to move on forward! Jesus was God's Only Begotten Son and He had brought with Him all that would be needed to save His beloved lost children.

And again, no, not everyone would receive Him and be saved. Many, as we see throughout these gospels, would still reject Him and refuse to accept Him as Savior. And it was because of all of this that He wept.

But thankfully, some would receive Him, and did, else the whole of humanity, in all of time, would be lost, eternally.

May we pause for a moment and make clear an infallible truth that very few people understand, but one that we really must accept. The infallible truth that since the days of Adam and Eve, every soul born to man would be born into this life totally depraved and destined for sure and eternal destruction. A condition that if no Savior had been given, all would be lost for every living soul, and eternally so.

Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus, these words immediately following the precious words of John 3:16. Beginning in John 3:17, Jesus said . . .

¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:17-18)

Did you note carefully those words of John 3:18. They are so very clear! Those words, "he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God?"

Most people, even many who count themselves as being devout Christians, do not know these words to be true, that there is born naturally into every human soul, a nature that is so full of iniquity that left unchanged would never be allowed to come into God's holy and pure kingdom. And that the one and only remedy for the saving of those lost souls would be for them to believe in and to

receive the Lord Jesus as their Savior. No other plan, no other way, no other means of salvation!

And Jesus knew all of this as He descended that hill into the city of Jerusalem, on His last visitation of it.

Folks, may I remind us again that while we cannot fully comprehend who Jesus really was, we must by faith accept that He truly was both God and man. And it would be His righteousness and His righteousness alone that would be a sufficient substitute to overcome and wipe away the sin that so captivated the hearts and souls of men and women and give them entrance into eternal life.

He was fully God and it had to be Him as God in the flesh, who would die to pay the penalty for the sin within us. No other sacrifice would be worthy or sufficient. Men cannot pay for their own sin. It takes the holiness of God to meet that sufficiency.

And Jesus, in His holiness, was that sufficient sacrifice. And in coming to us, He knew the exact mission that He had been sent to accomplish. As those words in John 3:17 that we just read tell us, "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

Jesus clearly knew His mission! And as He approached the city of Jerusalem, He grieved, not because He had failed in His mission, because He did not fail. No, He grieved because He knew that the holiness of God required that men and women be given the opportunity to follow the freedom of their own will. And He knew that many, many would reject Him and would choose to willingly remain forever in their lost condition.

Would all those who rejected Him actually understand what they were doing and deliberately go ahead and refuse His salvation? Most likely not . . . Most likely not!

And that is so even now, with us, in our day. Folks, the world, our flesh and the devil have a way of blinding men and women's eyes to the truth, a strange and mysterious kind of blindness, a blindness of our conscious mind, a blindness that can cause us to reject the Lord Jesus and His offer of salvation and us not even recognize the serious consequence of what we are doing.

Here, as Jesus looked at His beloved City, Jerusalem, He knew the depths of its lost condition. And He especially knew the travail that it was yet to suffer under the oppression and then the total destruction that lay ahead for it.

And He chose the most appropriate words to describe the condition of His beloved City and the condition of the ordinary people it represented, and especially the very difficult suffering that was yet to come. In verse 42, He spoke simply about a lack of peace, "peace".

And I must admit that as I read His words, I, at first, found it curious that He would sum up men's troubles by describing a lack of peace within our souls. But after thinking about it, "peace" and the "lack of peace" is the perfect description of our condition of soul.

We're told in the Book of James that we are actually "at enmity" with God. And also, in the Book of Romans, we're told that from the moment of our birth our hearts are actually "hostile" towards God. I confess that I never thought of myself as being an enemy of God and hostile towards Him. But these scriptures tell us that that is exactly the way of our souls, every one of us, that we each come into this world filled with totally depraved souls that are hostile towards God. And left unchanged, our souls will remain that way for an eternity.

And here, as Jesus approached His beloved city Jerusalem, He could clearly see the lack of peace, the hostility, the enmity that consumed so many of the people who lived there.

And please do understand that the same is true for you and for me, that this "lack of peace" is part of the ongoing travail within our human condition. Men and women's souls are continually in a state of unrest, roaming to and fro throughout daily life searching for, but never finding that elusive thing called "peace". We might not always call it "peace", or the "lack of peace". We might name it many other things, but it really is more aptly called "peace", or the "lack of peace".

And it's easy to see that many of our sins are linked to a lack of peace! We are never quite satisfied, at peace, with our wives, our husbands, our children, our jobs, our paycheck, our car, our truck, our house and especially our Lord. And we are always searching, but never finding that someone or that something that is better.

And as Jesus paused to look over His beloved city Jerusalem, He wept, because He knew that He had the solution to all of their endless wandering and their searching, and especially, their lack of peace, if they would only have ears to hear.

On another occasion He would say,

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
(John 14:27)

That special kind of peace that Jesus brought with Him and offered to all who would receive Him was a very special kind of peace, a peace that would overcome all "enmity" no matter its cause or its origin, a peace that could bless and calm each person's soul and then would extend on out into peace with God and peace with other people.

But He knew that most people would have none of the peace that He offered through salvation. And so, He wept!

Oh my dear friends, may we pause for a moment and take a close look within our own hearts. Is the Lord Jesus, right at this moment, standing on a hill somewhere in His Kingdom and looking at us. If He is, what might He be thinking?

As He peers deeply into the condition of your and my heart and soul, do we cause Him to weep for us? Does He know something that we perhaps do not ourselves know, that we are somehow rejecting Him and rejecting the peace that He wants to give to us?

Oh dear friends, as we mentioned a moment ago, this world that we live within really is consumed by a very strange kind of darkness, a darkness that blinds our eyes to the truth, the real truth, a blindness of our conscious mind, a blindness that can cause us to reject the Lord Jesus and His offer of salvation and us not even know that we are doing it.

Before we close today, may we take a moment and open our hearts and our minds to the things that have been said today.

Oh dear friends, each one of us truly has been born into a condition that is lost, eternally lost. And left unchanged by the salvation that the Lord Jesus brings to us, we will surely spend an eternity suffering the sure and certain consequences of hell. And yes, hell is real, very, very real.

And just your trying to do some good things for other people occasionally, hoping that God will appreciate what you're doing and save you won't really work.

And may I say also that as strange as it might sound, just "believing in Jesus" might also not be enough. It's one of the difficulties of living within our Southern Bible Belt. We all think we know God. But so many, many people only know "about" Him, but they have no real relationship with Him.

When my own heart was in that condition, I would sometimes pray earnestly and fervently for Jesus to help me saying, "Jesus please help me with my marriage, please help me with my finances, please help my loved one with their health. And I would earnestly want Him to answer my prayers. But then at the next moment I would turn and have no other relationship with Him.

So many, many people live daily in that condition of soul, believing in Jesus but going no further in their relationship with Him.

And folks, these scriptures tell us that even the demons and satan himself believe in Jesus. They know exactly who Jesus is. And they know exactly what He can do. But they don't want Him to be their Savior. And so, they shudder, knowing their fate is sealed.

Let me say this again! Just knowing about Jesus is never enough. We must not only believe in Him, we must also receive Him as our Savior. And listen, we really must not stop even there. We must also receive Him as our "Lord", allowing Him to guide and direct all those moments of our daily lives.

Dear friends, simply put, salvation and eternal life and the peace that it can bring to our souls cannot come to us in any other way. Salvation and eternal life and His peace can come to us only as we surrender our whole life, our heart, our soul, our mind and our spirit to our Lord. There is no other way to find that "peace" that Jesus so desired for His beloved Jerusalem, and the peace that He desires for you and me.

And so, as we come to a close today, may I exhort each of us to examine ourselves carefully, and to open our hearts to the drawing of His Spirit! Oh that we would simply but surely surrender ourselves to Him today. He so much wants to bring the peace of His salvation to reign within our souls. Listen again. Jesus tells us,

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
(John 14:27)

Pray with me.