

Scripture reading:

Luke 19:36 “And as [Jesus] went, many spread their clothes on the road. **37** Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, **38** saying: "'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

39 And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." **40** But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

41 Now as [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."”

''Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem''

Last week we saw the implications of the Triumphal entry of Jesus where God moves and we obey. This week we see the reaction of Jesus when He sees Jerusalem on the descent from the Mount of Olives. We see Jesus weeping and warning as He views the city and the Temple in all of their splendor

- Last week we focused on our response of obedience, and this week we will learn more about the one to whom we owe our obedience!

I had a great week preparing the last message, but the aftermath was a little rougher as God kept reminding me how poorly I do day to day when my actions are evaluated by those six words given to men in the church:

Sober... reverent... temperate... faithful... loving... patient...

These are things we will struggle with until we are fully glorified!

- This week we have the opportunity & privilege to see some insights into the heart & nature of our Savior: Jesus!

In our text this morning we find Jesus weeping as He sees Jerusalem: [describe the scene]

We see Jesus repeating the warnings that His people should have heeded and discussing the coming judgment they will face for disobeying and missing their ‘time of visitation.’

- While the picture of Jesus weeping over the lost should be an example for us all, it also raises some tough questions.

Modern Christians tend to ignore or trivialize such questions, but we do so to our own detriment.

- The Bible does not shrink from addressing tough questions and giving adequate answers:
- And neither should we.
- The Bible answers the BIG questions about life and does not shrink back from dealing with the BIG issues and questions
- The Bible gives us TRUE answers: Though sometimes they are difficult to explain or ones we cannot know exhaustively

Let me share an example about what I mean by looking at how the Bible reveals the creation of all things...

- We confess that Jesus is the Creator and here at Church of the King we read the creation account in Genesis chapter one on a regular basis as we did last week.

A covenant child, as they grow in the faith, or someone reading the Bible as a young Christian might ask at some point,

- “Where did the material that the universe is made of come from?”

Well, the Bible gives us a very clear answer to that question in Hebrews 11:3 “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, [*explain God spoke*] that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”

- God created everything there is out of nothing!
- That is the true answer, but the it is ALSO an incomprehensible answer from our limited standpoint as creatures...
- It is something we cannot exhaustively understand because as creatures, we CANNOT create anything from nothing!

This is where what is referred to as post-modern thinking, both outside and inside the church, gets things very wrong: They would say that IF I cannot fully comprehend and explain what the writer of the Hebrews has said, then I cannot say that I have found truth.

This is NOT the Biblical position:

- We can be sure that what God reveals is true because that is what God said!
- As Dr. Schaeffer always said to the moderns, we have true truth!

We don't believe it because of "blind faith" but rather we believe the answers given to us in the Bible because that is what God has revealed as the truth we as creatures can know! So what is the tough question that can be raised regarding what we see here in the text this morning:

- **IF Jesus is riding into Jerusalem to save His people from their sins with a salvation that is wholly of grace, then why can He not save all of these people?**

This is the heart of what Paul is addressing in chapters nine thru eleven in the Book of Romans, the often forgotten part of that great book of the Bible! Well, I am not going to ignore these important chapters...

- **In fact I am going to let Paul do most of the preaching here this morning to help us to better understand the heart of Jesus as He weeps over the City of Jerusalem!**

Our salvation IS all of grace and we know that God chose from eternity past who would be saved by the work of His Son Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- **Paul makes this case clearly in the first eight chapters of Romans**

Obviously God did not choose everyone who was in Jerusalem that day, or else Jesus would not have wept over those that would be lost.

- **However, it is important to see that Jesus really IS weeping over those who are lost...**
- **The Triune God of the Bible is not like the Greek god's who toyed with people's lives for their own pleasure**

Three times the Prophet Ezekiel tells us that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked: For example... Ezekiel 33:11 "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'"

These all come in chapters 18 & 33 where we are commanded to sound the warning about the dangers of unbelief! This is very similar to what we see in this section of Romans where Paul answers our tough question:

- **Right in the midst of the strongest teaching about God's sovereign choice of who will be saved, we have the strongest call of the New Testament to preach the Good News of God's salvation.**
- **So let's turn to Romans 9 to see the answer for the question of why Jesus did not save everyone in Jerusalem on that day?**
- **Here we also find an emotional Paul as he considers the same problem Jesus is weeping over:**

Romans 9:1 “I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.”

- **Paul is weeping over the Jews much as we do over those who have been excommunicated or family members who are not saved: Willing, if it were possible to even give his own life for them**
- **Paul then begins to address the tough question: Why were they not all saved?**

6 “But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.”

- **We do not inherit salvation, we do not do good works to be saved and cannot even claim salvation because we have been baptized!**
- **Only those who have been chosen by God and given the gift of saving faith are the true children of Abraham**
- **Paul now confirms this with examples from the Old Testament:**

9 “For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." 10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”

- **Paul says it is solely God’s choice: A choice made in eternity past**
- **Paul then anticipates the heart of the tough question**

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?

Certainly not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." 16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.”

- **Just as the Bible answered our question about where the stuff of creation came from, we are told that God has mercy on whom He chooses to have mercy!**
- **Paul then gives another example from history to illustrate the seriousness of this point**

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens."

- **God pours out His gracious salvation on some of the lost children of Adam and with others He uses the ravages of their own sin to harden their hearts**
- **This brings the obvious follow-up question that is often asked:**
- **How God can hold someone accountable if they do not have a choice?**

19 "You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?"

- **First Paul makes it clear that there are some things that the creature cannot demand to know and certainly the creature cannot judge the creator**
- **We are NOT allowed to say to God, that is not fair to leave some in their lost estate, or that this is not how I would have done things!**
- **But Paul then gives us a glimpse of what the reason might be, but we must be careful because just as Jesus said "what if" regarding John's not dying until He returned, Paul also says 'what if.'**

22 "What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

- **Paul goes on to remind us that the Prophets said all of Israel would have been lost except for God's mercy**
- **Paul explains that they stumbled over the rock which is what we are seeing as Jesus enters Jerusalem**
- **In Chapter ten Paul continues to express his concern for his brethren, the Jews:**

Romans 10:1 "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

- **The critics of predestination tell us that it cannot be true & should not be discussed even if it was!**
- **Such a doctrine would destroy the desire and even the need for evangelism... they might say,**

- ‘ If God is going to save those who are saved no matter what we do, then why do anything,’
- But the Biblical position is quite different: Notice first, that Paul is driven to pray for the lost, knowing that God has the power to save!
- Paul goes on to explain that the Jews are zealous for the wrong things, not understanding the Gospel that had been preached by the Law and the Prophets...

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes... The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

- Again, our critics would say, but if God chooses who will be saved then only the elect will call on the name of the Lord
- True enough we say, at which point they say, then why share the Gospel
- The easy answer is because that is what God commands us to do!
- In fact, the strongest command comes right here in the middle of the teaching about predestination!

14 “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

- What a glorious picture to see and remember as we enter the Advent season where even the music of the shopping malls will ‘preach the gospel of peace!’
- We must be faithful to preach the Good News and pray that people will hear with ears of faith!
- Paul reminds us that the Gospel has gone out to all the world, both to the Jews and the Gentiles and concludes chapter ten with the struggle that Jesus is weeping over in this morning’s text:

21 “But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."”

- Paul then addresses another tough question in chapter eleven:

Romans 11:1 “I say then, has God cast away His people?”

- A good question, because if the Jews were God’s people why are they not saved? Has God abandoned them?
- Paul gives a short answer:

“Certainly not!”

- And then he goes on to explain this more fully using himself as the first example!

11:1b “For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.

- Immediately following the grand charge to evangelize the world, Paul is right back to affirming the doctrine of predestination!
- Paul himself was likely there in the city of Jerusalem as Jesus wept as were many of the thousands saved at Pentecost!
- Paul also gives another important example from history to help us understand: Reminding us again that we NEED to know our entire Bible!

2 “Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 "Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"?

- Elijah is convinced that God has abandoned His people and that all is lost, but God tells Him otherwise...

4 “But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.”

- The Good News of the Gospel is that God has shown mercy on whom He will show mercy!
- Paul then again explains how Jesus is the rock of offense for many Jews and whether they have been lost entirely:

11 “I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.”

- The Jews were a proud people who had refused to take the Gospel to the nations as they were commanded, wanting the Messiah who was to be the Savior of the world to be “their Messiah!”
- But God uses even their stubbornness to His glory...

12 “Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! 13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.”

- **Jesus IS weeping over those who will be lost and lamenting the coming destruction of Jerusalem, but this is NOT the end of the story: The Gospel is going forth to the nations, those Gentiles...**
- **AND God is not finished with the Jews either!**

15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.”

- **Paul warns his gentile converts against the very sin that brought down the nation of Israel: PRIDE!**

19 “You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.”

22 “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God...”
-- our God is loving AND just...

“Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.”

- **Paul continues the discussion of the natural and wild branches wanting us to better understand the wonder of God’s salvation...**

25 “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”

- **We cannot understand all the details of election and the Gospel, but we are told the result!**
- **When we ask these tough questions, we approach areas where we can be given answers that are true, but also mysterious!**

- Such is the case here, but we should rejoice with Paul as he considers the marvels of God's great love for His people:

I thought it appropriate to sing O Come, O Come Emmanuel as we ponder the power of Christ's coming & I can think of no better way to conclude than with the words of Paul at the end of chapter 11 in Romans:

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" 35 "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" 36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Communion Meditation:

Isaiah 12:1 "And in that day you will say: "O Lord, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. 2 Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' " 3 Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."