

Saint Thomas' Church
 Trinity X
 August 25, 2019
 rmceely+

If thou hadst known,
 Even thou,
 At least in this thy day
 the things which belong unto thy peace

We continue the Trinity Season Survey of Christian Doctrine today

But in order to best appreciate the import of today's Gospel and Epistle,
 we need to go back to the day of Jesus' Triumphal
 Entry into Jerusalem.
 Right. The Palm Sunday event.

Jesus leads His disciples over the Mt of Olives
 And as they crest the mount
 There is this panoramic view of Jerusalem below them
 Gleaming white and gold in the sunshine is the Temple
 We are just at the point before Jesus enters the City
 He will be Seated on a donkey
 Many people will gather to greet Him
 There will be Celebration, Shouting, Hosanna in the highest!

We can hardly appreciate the excitement,
 joy and electricity in the air.

But in the anticipation of all this glory
 When we would expect Him to be elated,
 Jesus Weeps.

We can only stand by open mouthed and ask , ... why?

There is an interesting interplay in this account between Jesus'
Divine and Human natures in this scene.
He knows that in 40 years Jerusalem will be reduced to rubble
By the Romans
Even the temple will come down.
He knows that the people will suffer horribly
When the Romans crush a rebellion in 70A.D.
Mass bloodshed
Children murdered in the streets.

And He knows that most of the Jews
God's chosen people
Will not understand what they are seeing the day of His entry
Will not recognize the Messiah
Prophesied so many times in scripture

He knows that many will mock Him
For a fake
Who did not free them from the Romans.
He knows He will not save them all.

In His divine nature He knows all this

His Human nature
Reacts
In human emotional fashion
The sadness is overwhelming and for a brief moment
He weeps

Let's try to follow the trail of His tears
to see where it might lead us.

Jesus is certainly saddened
by what he knows is coming
But his tears may also lead in another direction

Jerusalem is often used by our Lord as a metaphor.
representing us and our souls.

You can often substitute yourself for the term Jerusalem.

So, doing so now:

our Lord's tears are then, also for us.

Today,

right now.

Our enemies shall build a trench around us

Compass us round

Keep us in on every side

And lay us even with the ground with no stone left upon
another.

Haven't we all felt that way sometimes?

Is that where the trail of Jesus' tears leads?

He weeps for us?

Jesus says through His tears

“If thou hadst known, even thou,

at the least in this thy day

the things which belong unto thy peace!

But now are hid from thine eyes.

Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

Kinda mysterious, don't you think. What is He telling us?

His lament is perhaps a little obscure in 17th Century English.

Let me try to translate it so that it may be more meaningful to
us.

Try this:

“If this day you only knew what would bring you peace
-but now is hidden from your eyes;
because you did not recognize
the time of God coming to you.
What would bring you peace”

Jesus observes that the disciples and by inference,
He observes that we too,
do not know what it is that brings us peace.

We need to step aside briefly on this notion of Peace as the
Hebrews knew it.

The ancient Hebrew concept of ‘peace’,
was a much broader concept
than the way that we use it today.

It was more than the absence of armed conflict.
Peace was when they were close to God.
Peace was when the gifts of God, their food, water,
shelter were plentiful
and there was no immediate threat to survival.

Jesus was referring to the gifts of God.

The greatest gift of course, was Jesus Himself.
His incarnation and life with mankind on Earth
His three year ministry on Earth
His sacrifice, Forgiveness and Eternal life.

Jesus knew that the children of Israel had all those things,
and that they had their very salvation in their hands,
in the person of Jesus himself,
but did not know it
and did not “know the things which belong unto their peace”.

The Jerusalem Jews were blind to this –
 it was ‘hid from their eyes’ (in Luke’s words) —
 they couldn’t see the consequences –
 this tragedy drove our Lord to tears.

St Luke tells us that Jesus put it this way : “Thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.”

Jerusalem did not see
 that the timeless gift of their salvation
 was within their grasp
 in the person of Jesus, the Christ:
 if they would but understand
 the making of their peace with God
 and the securing of their own spiritual and eternal
 welfare through Our Lord Jesus,
 they would not perish .

But, they were blinded by their own folly
 and refused to open their eyes
 and see that the Son of God was among them for their
 eternal salvation and for their eternal life.

So, Jesus’ tears were because the people of Jerusalem had
 received the peace,
 the Gifts of God;
 but did not recognize them.

Through their carelessness,
 they let the things of their peace pass by,
 as if they were nothing,

Just like the people of Jerusalem, we all receive the gifts of God,

but it is rarely for our personal,
immediate, benefit
that many of us receive them.

And we can begin to see what Jesus is telling us
Begin to see the trail of His tears

But was Jesus also talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit?
The gifts that St Paul is talking about in the Epistle for today?

We need some context for Paul's letter to the church at Corinth.
The Corinthians were a troublesome lot for Paul.

There was a difficult conversion from a strongly held pagan
religion to what later became known as Christianity.

The Corinthians did not readily give up their pagan roots.

Paul established the church in Corinth in his second missionary
journey.

He left Corinth for Ephesus and then returned to Jerusalem

Without Paul to guide them, some of the Corinthians

Lapsed back into pagan philosophy.

They had come to a point where people who exhibited the
ecstasies

Were thought of as somehow more superior than the rest.

They concentrated on the recipient as somehow blessed

And not on God, as the source of the grace.

Paul's letter dealt with the problem and the portion we have in
 today's Epistle in particular was directed to explain to them
 The role of the Gifts of God in their lives.

Paul stressed that God gives different gifts to different people
 And that all such gifts are from God
 For the purpose of benefiting all people.
 They were not a badge of special treatment
 Or status
 To be bandied about and worshiped as an idol.

His advice to us is the same.
 And leads us back to the tears of Jesus.

The lament of Jesus as He heads to the triumphal entry into
 Jerusalem
 Encompasses His sorrow that the Jews
 (And we must include ourselves with them)
 Do not see that we have been given great gifts
 And we do not understand what we are to do with them
 And what they can do for our lives and the lives of others.
 Jesus knows the consequences of these failings
 And what it would mean to mankind if we did.

Are we like the disciples cheering Jesus as He rides to His
 victory on the Cross for our redemption
 Do we know the time of our visitation?
 Do we know that God has sent His Son to Earth in human form
 And He dwelt among us; Is among us now?
 Can we appreciate what that means in our lives?
 What Gifts He brings
 And what it means in our lives?

Occasionally, the Holy Ghost works within each of us,
with the grace that God gives us
in order to benefit others.

With God's grace
we become the instruments of God
to do His will.

St Paul makes the same point in today's famous Epistle
about God's gifts.

In a wonderful irony of Christianity
It is in the giving away of the Grace of God
That we receive the blessings of our lives.

I have told it before and excuse me if it is familiar to you
But I want to tell you a true story that so very well
illustrates the Tears of our Lord:

It is about a man
Ryan Nece is his name. He was an out of work professional
football player living in Florida hoping to return to football.

Ryan is a talented athlete who like many athletes. knows
God has given him his abilities. He was in church several
years ago and heard a sermon that changed his life. A few
days later he had an idea.

He withdrew a boat load of cash from his bank account and
he went down to the family restaurant that he frequented
where many friends gathered.

In today's world, you could figure this story would end badly.

A professional athlete with a wad of cash headed out to meet his friends, can be expected to get into all kinds of trouble and notoriety.

But Ryan gave each of his friends and people he knew, an envelope that contained \$55. Ryan's jersey number when he last played was number 55. But he told the people the money was not for them and were not to use it for themselves. It was a gift, but they were to use it any way they could think of to benefit someone else and to encourage the person who received their gift to use it to help another person and so on.

Ryan Nece used his God given gift that had earned him money, and gave it away to do God's will. And the stories of what the people did with the money will make you cry.

Ryan Nece is quite a man. There is a local aspect about him that he would not have you know last about him. Ryan is the son of Ronnie Lott, the former 49er and Hall of Fame football player. But Ryan has earned his own way in life based upon his own efforts and talents. He even uses his mother's name so as not to depend upon his father's fame.

It is not about money. Ryan's story is an easy illustration of the point and it's easy to follow the money to make the point.

The point of Ryan's story is that unlike the people of Jerusalem, Ryan gets it.

He “knows the things which belong unto his peace”
He “ knows the time of his visitation” in the words of
today’s Gospel.

So if we follow the trail of our Lord’s tears in St Luke’s
Gospel, we are led to a number of conclusions and can
learn a number of lessons but the hard lesson for us is this,
and this is what you should remember of this sermon:

We may not just accept the grace of God, we must ity and
do God’s will with His grace or face the spiritual fate that
befell Jerusalem.