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Sermon

Sunday March 16th 2025

“At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (Luke 13:31-35)

Grace, Mercy, and Peace unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

“There was a family at night near the lake sitting around a campfire laughing, telling stories, cooking smores, having fun. Then a bear coming from the woods started to get closer and closer and you could hear the bear starting to roar. And the family became scared backing away from the campfire except for the one man. He stayed near the campfire. He looked at the bear coming towards him and he looked towards his family and said, “Why do you fear, why do you run? Do you not see all this bear wants is food. The sibling of the man responded with, “yes, food as in you and me.” The man kept quiet. He felt a strong wind on his face. He took a bucket, went to the lake and filled the bucket with water. He dropped down to his knees and began to pray, and when he was finished he walked over to the bear and as he walked over to feed the bear the water was splashing in the bucket, full of fish. The man sat down for he knew he was in no danger and began to hand feed the bear. But then two tiny little cubs were hiding behind a bush and came to the campsite as the mother called them. And they too the man hand fed with the fish the Lord blessed him with. The man’s family looked confused almost scared in a way. Almost as if they were wondering, who is this man? And the man said to his family, do not be afraid. For the Lord our God is with us and because He is with us, why be afraid? The man told his family to come join him. But they were too afraid and stayed far off. When the family of bears’ stomachs were satisfied they left. The man looked at his family and said, all creation has been made by the Lord. The plants, the food you eat, this family of bears, this fire that keeps us warm and cooks our food, and of course yourselves for all good comes from the Lord.

In our Gospel reading when you first read, “At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus. They said to Him, “Leave this place. Go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31) You may think, “Oh that’s nice.” “The Pharisees seem have a heart of gold because they do not want Christ to die.” But understand my brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus this is nothing more than a great trick thought up by the Pharisees. And honestly it would be more rightly to call the Pharisees in our story thieves rather than priests. And you may say, “Oh, but they were warning Jesus they did not seem to want Him hurt.” This is why I call them thieves.

Realize my brother and sisters in Christ we are sinners, we cannot help ourselves. We have done wrong, errored against the LORD. Our sacrifices that we make cannot save us. This is why I like Paul. Paul writes, “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.” (Galatians 2:21)

This is why I call the Pharisees thieves. Do not let these false teachers or people steal this great act of love, this great act of mercy, grace bestowed upon you. When you read this story where the Pharisees warn Jesus that Herod wishes to kill you. Be upset. You would be right to feel so. They are trying to stop the very purpose the prefect sacrifice that we need. We need Christ to die. For if Christ did not die; if He listened to the pharisees and stopped and gave up His passion, then the Gospel would not have been witnessed. I was thinking about a Psalm of David which says, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” (Psalm 51:5-7) “Purge me with hyssop?” do you know what the Jewish holiday called Yom Kippur is. It is when the Jewish people dressed in white, stood in front of a Jewish priest who sacrificed a lamb and put the lamb’s blood in a bowl and used a plant called hyssop and dipped the hyssop in the lamb’s blood and sprinkled it on the people, showing purification. Another example of this was the tenth plague in Egypt. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt what was the tenth plague? When the Lord led his angels to kill the first born child in Egypt that did not have the lamb’s blood on their door frame. The reason I say the Lord led His angels is because in the Hebrew language people sometimes confuse two words Sabaoth (meaning Gods Worship Day) and Sabaoth (meaning the Lord of Angel Armies) because often we think it was an angel of death that was the tenth plague but that is not what the Hebrew translation says. It truly says the Lord of Angel Armies came and killed the first born that did not have the lamb’s blood on their door frames. And our Lamb is Christ Jesus our Lord who blood was shed and sprinkled on us forgiving our sins and bring us to life everlasting. Again, remember my brothers and sisters of Christ do not allow these wicked thieves to steal the life saving faith in you. Do not allow them to steal your sacrificial lamb’s blood which covers your body.

In Jeremiah it says, “Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant’?” And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.” (Jeremiah 26:9) Now Shiloh is known as the site where the Tabernacle was set up after the Israelites entered the promised land. Jeremiah

known as the weeping prophet was pretty much telling the people, 'hey wake up! You guys are so far away from God. You need to repent and turn back because if you do not turn to Him; if you reject Him; if you ignore Him, then salvation does not belong to you. Salvation only belongs to those who have faith and trust in the LORD.' This is why it is written in Jeremiah, "this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?" The people were going away from the Lord prideful in their sin and if they continued to do so, the promised kingdom will be something they cannot experience. Only those who trust and who believe that Christ Jesus died forgave all sin can truly experience the "promised city" the relationship with the one true Triune God.

Oh, look how stubborn and wicked of a people we are. How do I know? Because the LORD who has perfect faith, perfect love for His creation was oh so willing to bring you home but we wicked and evil people ignored him rejected Him. We shut our door and locked it, we turned our house lights off, hid under the table and pretended we were not there when the LORD came knocking. And I want you to understand when He comes, He comes with a deaf knock meaning He makes sure you can see the door vibrate. He pounds on the door. He is not just slightly tapping it. He is banging on it and you wicked people ignore it. This is why Christ Himself says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34) Yes, we fell into sin, we turned away from God but Christ Jesus who has always been and always had so perfect faith, so perfect love for us that even after sin He remained with us. He sent us prophets to help us go back to Him to return to that perfect relationship with Him. But there is the problem. He continually gave and gave and gave but you Jewish people who are so stubborn and set in your own selfish ways did not care they did not want His grace, they rejected that love. Honestly they blinded themselves by their own wickedness.

Remember my brother and sisters of Christ, remember Christ's perfect faith, remember His perfect love and sacrifice He bestowed upon you. Because we are in the season of Lent and part of Lent is repentance to know I am an evil, wicked sinner, I deserve death and eternal damnation but we remember Christ Jesus on His way to become the sacrificial lamb. During Lent we realize, who killed Jesus? I did. We did. His entire purpose was to die and rise on the third day, so we could live. Remember what Christ tells us, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." (John 14:3) He died, He rose so in the same way we also die with Him and on the last day, will rise! All this has been made possible only through our sacrificial lamb named Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

And the Peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.