

Trinity 10

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.

What are the “things which make for you peace?”

And what are the things which cause you strife and conflict?

Do you know the difference? Or are they hidden from your eyes?

These are the questions that our Lord sets before you today.

The Jews blamed their troubles on Jesus. They said, “If we let [Jesus] alone, the Romans will come and take both our place and our nation.” (John 11:48)

But Jesus wasn’t the first. The reading from Jeremiah recalls when he was plotted against as a troublemaker.

And before him, Elijah was called the “troubler of Israel.”

But it’s not just the Jews who regularly got it wrong.

It still happens in the Church to this day: whenever we feel threatened and hard-pressed and respond by blaming God.

Of course, nobody will admit that that’s what they’re doing.

Instead, we identify some other bogeyman.

“Religious fanaticism” has recently become just such a whipping boy.

While it is obvious that suicide bombers are all related by a false view of God and flagrant disregard for the fifth commandment...

Many today want, rather, to blame the problem on “overzealousness” and thus cast aspersions on all believers--most especially Christians.

The real aim of this is to shame you away from a bold reliance on the Word.

Of course this attack is launched from outside the Church, but there are others that are launched inside of it.

“Don’t be so literalistic,” is often code for “don’t be such a fanatic about following the words of Jesus.” Get with the times! Admit change!

Ironically, the same thing can be meant also when Christians reject the creeds or liturgy of the Church. Here, under the guise of “Bible only” they want to be free to follow their own private interpretations--their own inner light.

And this is really what the struggle is within each and every person.

Having been created by God to live under Him and His commands, your fall into sin means that we now see His commands as oppressive and enslaving.

We instinctively feel as though God is the cause of our turmoil.

This is the root of all sin. Every time you think, speak or act contrary to God’s Word you do so because you think you know what makes for your peace.

And so, it is not just with hostility that God’s Word is attacked.

Some simply close their ears to it because they know it will upset their lives.

Others will come and listen, but want it on their own terms in measured amounts lest they be challenged to change some long-standing assumptions.

But all of these attitudes are from the same stem—a mistaken notion that something other than God’s visitation can give true peace.

Today Jesus weeps bitterly for His people who reject His gracious visitation.

For He knows the horrors that follow.

In the wisdom of their own minds, the Jews rejected the Christ because they were afraid of losing the holy land and their temple.

In the end, they lost not only Christ, but their promised land and their church, but also their lives as well—both in time and in eternity.

They were slaughtered by the thousands and their temple was leveled.

We can read all about these horrible punishments in history books.

And Jesus’ tears were not idle tears to no purpose.

But rather they impelled Him forward to complete the things that make for peace.

Jesus, seeing the great punishment which comes to those who reject Him and His Word, He pressed on to the cross.

There He took that horrible punishment upon Himself for the sins of the world.

That was then and it is now finished. Jesus by ascending the cross made peace.

But Jesus has not stopped His gracious visitations. Still today He comes.

Today is the day of your visitation!

Do you know it? Do you know the things that make for your peace?

The Word which you are hearing right now is the preaching of Jesus Himself.

In this way He comes to visit you in this time and place.

In this way He brings you the things that make for your peace.

By His precious body and blood, He comes to you in the flesh.

These are the things which make for your peace!

For by these things, Jesus stills the hostility between God and man.

In these things, Jesus rescues you from Satan’s grip and from the certain destruction that he would bring.

Do you know the time of your gracious visitation?

Do you know the things that make for your peace?

You need not wonder long about these questions.

For it is not as though we are sitting here alone and waiting for another chance to receive Christ and His gracious visitation.

In fact, today, the Lord in His grace and mercy visits you again.

We know this because we hear his voice speaking to us in preaching.

And we know His promise that “where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am in their midst.” and “Whoever receives the one that I send, receives Me.” (John 13:20)

And so here He says, “I have heard your prayer and have come to visit you.

“I have given My life to redeem you from your wicked ways and save you from the certain destruction which comes to all those who reject Me.

“I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the Church that I have given you forever and ever.—no one will remove you from the promised land.

“Do you hear My voice? Then believe that it is I, your Lord, the very One who has bathed and washed you with my tears in Holy Baptism.

“Know that it is I who serve you with My own body and blood, given for you and for your true peace. My tears for you are not in vain but have worked repentance and faith in the your hearts.”

And the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.