

August 15th 2021 Luke 19 v41-47 Jesus weeps over Israel

Sometimes we have days filled with drama, stress, and emotion.

Roller coaster days – Ronan Keating did a really good song about it! ‘Life is a roller coaster!’ One of my favourites! Well, Jesus was having one of those days.

This chapter in Luke starts with the story of Zaccheus; goes on to detail Jesus’ triumphal entry, a confrontation with some of the Pharisees, and then a very emotional reaction to the view! We have an opportunity to see glimpses of God’s love and passion for us in these verses.

Let’s look in more detail.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

Many commentators describe the particular view Jesus would have seen as he came from Bethany and approached Jerusalem, as one of the most spectacular and extraordinary. The Temple, at that time, was magnificent with gilding and white marble.

It would have sparkled and flashed in the spring sunlight. It was described at the time as ‘a mass of gold and snow’.

He wept. This isn’t the same word used as he grieved with Martha and Mary outside Lazarus’ tomb. That word describes tears falling from his eyes, down his cheeks and into his beard.

This word, however, in the Greek, *klaio*, means, weep, wail, lament; an external expression of grief. For the Jews this would have meant, making loud noise, rocking, tearing of robes and maybe even throwing dirt on the head. This is a

strong word to describe a full blown, body involving, agonising grief.

We now have a picture in our minds of Christ’s deep lament.

But why? Why did he cry over Jerusalem?

He was prophesying the coming destruction of the city; the Holy city, built on Abraham’s Mount Moriah and David’s Mount Zion. The capital of God’s nation during King David’s reign. The future centre of God’s Kingdom on earth.

The physical ruin and brutal slaughter of over a million citizens would happen 40 yrs later under the rule of Titus a Roman General.

He wept in full sympathy with those who have been longing for peace in Jerusalem, and yet his people were rejecting Him. Refusing his rescue. He knew He would soon suffer at the hands of the authorities but his grief was for his people And he could see the tragic, inevitable consequences of their unbelief and rejection.

Christ’s deepest grief is when He stands before us, holding out exactly what we need and we refuse it.

This reminds me of Terry’s often used phrase ‘learn to live loved’. This is the extent of God’s love for you. He wants to bless us. He wants us to rely on Him. To believe Him. Trust Him. And know we are loved by Him

His utter despair and sorrow at the choices of His chosen people are also for us. When we reject his gifts, his love, his strength, his peace; he is sorrowful.

It is like giving a much thought about and specially chosen gift for someone and see it rejected, dismissed.

In that first verse of our reading, verse 41 he says 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace'....

He wants to give us his peace. All of us. In all our situations and circumstances; in the messes; in the trauma; in the pain. He has the peace we need. We only have to ask for it. Give the situation to him.

Now to the scene in the Temple, of which Jesus has just prophesied its destruction.

If we look at the beginning of scripture we see God explaining to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through him. So right from the start we hear of Gods express purpose for us to be witnesses to all people.

And yet, the outer Temple court which was for gentiles was a terrible witness!

The Jews called gentiles dogs; wouldn't associate with the Samaritans because they were mixed race. The signs in the Temple were numerous for no entry upon certain death. It had become a business centre with dishonest transactions, commercialism in holy precincts.

Unequal exchange rates, exorbitant prices so costly that the poor had no chance of offering sacrifices or paying the temple tax. They were excluded.

And Christ's spiritual House was desecrated.

Jesus Christ is passionate about his Father's House. It is a House of Prayer.

And we are to be a people of prayer....

The Passion translation of Philippians 4 v6,7 ..

'Don't be pulled in different directions or worried about a thing. Be saturated in prayer throughout each day, offering your faith-filled requests before God with overflowing gratitude. Tell him every detail of your life, then God's wonderful peace that transcends human understanding, *will make the answers known to you* through Jesus Christ.'

Pray for those who persecute you; pray to your father who is unseen; watch and pray; always pray and do not give up ;pray to the lord for me; we do not know what we ought to pray but the spirit himself intercedes for us;

So many verses on praying..

1 Corinthians 3 v16 says, 'Don't you know that you yourselves are God's Temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?'

Our bodies are the 'temple of the Holy Spirit' and the local church or Christian community is God's temple. Jesus is passionate about our Church.

These 6 verses have shown us so much of Gods passion for us, for our nations and Church communities.

All people are precious to God. He is passionate about all of us.

Some questions for us to think about..

Are we, as a church community witnessing that unconditional love and care?

Are we truly welcoming all who come and join us?

Are we a Church of prayer or one that just prays because we are supposed to?

And, do we recognise Gods heartbreak over the missed opportunities, missed blessings and missed peace that he has offered us and we have refused them?

Let's pray,

Loving Father, thank you that you love all of us. Each and every one.

Forgive our pride and ignorance in sometimes refusing what you offer us.

Open our eyes to the opportunities you have prepared for us.

Open our hearts to all you want to give us.

And help us to relinquish all those things that worry us and cause us pain. Strengthen us to be your witnesses and to honour you each and every day.

Amen

Gilly Robinson, 15 August 2021