

Grace mercy & Peace from God our Father & Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Someone said something to me recently that has stuck with me. I've shared it a number of times with people, and I may have even done so from the pulpit. If I'm repeating myself, please forgive me, but in light of Jesus' words this morning, it bears repeating. They said, "*Once in a while I find myself at the county dump. While I'm there, I take a moment to take a good look at everything heaped up in the transfer station, and remind myself that all the stuff that I prize and treasure will end up here.*"

Jesus says something similar to His disciples this morning as He walks out of the temple and His disciples comment on how impressive of the immense, hewn stones of the temple are. He says, "*Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.*"

Jesus' finds His disciples – men who come from the distant rural villages of Galilee – ***commenting***, "*Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!*" They did not exaggerate; the typical stone with which Herod's temple was constructed was 2.5 feet tall x 3.5 feet deep x 15 feet long. They weighed an average of 56,000 pounds. The largest stones weighed in at 200,000 pounds.

Looking at the monolithic stone structure, ***Jesus needs us to understand that as big, hard, heavy and even beautiful as the temple complex may have been, or as tiny and well-engineered as an iPhone is – they are all fleeting – even unimportant.*** Someday it just won't be there anymore. As impressive and awe inspiring as it may be, ***Jesus wants***

them to understand that ultimately it is irrelevant, won't matter, and He is not impressed.

This morning Jesus gently reminds us that no matter how important or impressive our accomplishments – and I mean our individual accomplishments, our congregational accomplishments and our collective human accomplishment – may seem, they will not endure.

In the case of the Herod's temple, it will be in ruins within one person's life time – about forty years later.

What was Jesus impressed by? *We have seen this – last week, just a few verses before . A poor widow who just moments before Jesus has seen placing her entire meager living in the temple treasury.* What makes an impression on Jesus is faith and action that cause a person not to consider themselves, *but commit their life to God's cause of reassuring the world of the love God has for us all.*

It's what He is about to do. In a matter of days Jesus will make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem to begin His Passion, and within a week He will die on cross on Golgotha. He will give himself completely and without any reservation to demonstrate God's unbounded love for each of us.

The good news of this text is that though none of our achievements are enduring, nor our knowledge of God's timetable certain, *God's accomplishment in the cross is enduring and Jesus' has set us free from the power of all that oppresses us.*

Since these things are no longer at the forefront of our lives because of Jesus, *with what are we to concern ourselves in the meantime as we await his return?* Jesus' work for the Church calls us to follow Him in lives of

selfless devotion to the world – ***to concern ourselves with what Jesus concerned Himself***: the ordinary, the unimpressive, the neighbor – not the people who catches our eye, who are confident and accomplished, but the ones who have nothing with which to impress us – ***the poor, the forgotten, the hungry, the homeless, the lonely, the sick, the frightened.***

And how are we to meet them? As a group of people who in our accomplishment can help? ***No!*** But as individuals, beloved of God in Christ Jesus, who by the power of the Holy Spirit, have the wisdom and humility to share the love of God with the world.

We share the good news, which in this morning's cases is that while God is not impressed by any human achievement or accomplishment, by the same token ***God is not impressed, intimidated, bothered or hindered by those things which cause us the greatest fear or uncertainty...*** war, famine, recession, sickness, violence, even death.

By the cross Jesus has overcome them all, and returned victorious. He promises that ***He is with us through every great or small struggle or triumph of this life, and when we emerge from this often traumatic tunnel of life – He will still be with us. Ultimately, we have nothing to fear.***

(Pause)

But we do fear. We are plagued by anxieties and fears, we feel dwarfed in the midst of larger events and disasters. What are we to do? ***We are called to remember and remind one another that we are not alone, that Christ has overcome every obstacle that plagues our lives, and that we are loved.***

This week in some significant or insignificant way you may have taken the time and the effort to put aside all the demanding structure of your life, and simply care for someone who needs reassurance; I know some of you have. If not, think for yourselves about a time when you have done so – they will stand out in your memory – because they were and are profoundly important. These are the moments when we are truly alive, when we matter and make the difference of displaying God’s love and friendship.

I want you to *understand something else as well*. It’s not just about being strong for the other in our lives. *It’s also about being weak, and allowing another to share our moment of raw, jagged, tender fear*. For in doing so – in those moments – both we and the other person know that we are not alone and that we are loved, and we allow God’s healing to occur, and resurrection life to be revealed.

This is what impresses Jesus – sharing ourselves, taking the risk to reveal our lives in all its imperfection and unanswered questions with a someone else, and despite ourselves and uncertainty – trusting that God is in control, and that everything will be all right.

This is *how Jesus walked to the cross – with fear and trembling, and yet with trust and hope in the Father’s love and promise*. And this is how Christ calls us to walk through our troubled lives and world. With fear and trembling? Yes, but with trust in the Father’s love and promise for the world.

It *may not be a monolithic structure engendering awe, but it will not be destroyed* because it is *not based on confidence in ourselves, but in the*

knowledge of God's love revealed in Christ and in and through one another.

And as impressive as Herod's temple may have been – or any human achievement may be – *this temple of faith and hope is more impressive still, because in 4 or 14 or 40 years it will still be here calling us to hope, to mercy, to love.*

AMEN!!