

## Triumph & Tears

Luke 19:44

Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa

Luke 19:43-44 “For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

- Introduction: Be prepared: Boy Scout motto

I was never a very good Scout. I was part of Cub Scouts but lost interest in Boy Scouts by the time I reached that age, missing out on many opportunities to learn and grow. I preferred to simply spend time with my friends, who also were not in Scouts. My interest in Scouts grew when I took my first pastorate in Boston and we had a number of children and teens who had never left the city. They, and I and a friend of mine took them camping out in the country and we had a copy of the current Boy Scout handbook with us, so we could learn how to start a fire and cook in the outdoors and organize our tents. I still have the book. On several occasions we learned the great motto, "be prepared." It is the application for our sermon today when our Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph but when He looked over the city He was reduced to tears.

- Set the stage

As we read Luke 19, we find the Lord teaching a parable involving three servants, each given a certain amount of money by their Lord with instructions to do business and increase the amount. They called the currency the "mina". The master left for some time and when he returned, the servants gave an accounting. The first two had doubled their investments; one with twenty minas instead of ten and the other with ten minas instead of five. The master rewarded them with authority over the number of cities corresponding with the money they gained. The servant who gained ten minas had authority over ten cities, the one who gained five minas was over five cities. Note however, that the master had subjects that did not care for him and wanted to overthrow him, and even one of his servants had a low opinion of him. The third servant had one mina and he returned the single mina back to him, saying that he was a hard master and that he feared him. It didn't go well for that servant or for the delegation representing subjects that wanted Him overthrown.

After that, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem in triumph, hailed as the Messiah by people who made a sort of "red carpet" with their cloaks, or if they had no cloak, with palm branches. Children sang His praises, and the religious leaders could do nothing. At a certain point, now marked by a chapel along the main road into Jerusalem, Jesus stopped to look over the view of the city available at that point. He started to cry, weeping over the city doomed to fall, as it did in 70 AD, because they did not recognize their time of visitation.

- Main point: know the time of your visitation

The main point in this passage, at least for today, is that the failure of the people to know the time of their visitation was tragic. They had waited for Messiah for generations, now He had been among them for years, in ministry for them for three years and this would be His last week. He knew what was going to happen. He knew that the cheers would turn to jeers and that He would be betrayed and executed. There was a plan in all of it, but the point remains the same. People awaited the Messiah, and they did not recognize Him when He showed up.

- Amplify  
AD 70

The words of Jesus as He wept over Jerusalem took place in 70 AD, when the Roman Empire sacked Jerusalem and completely destroyed the great Temple there. To this day, the Dome of the Rock, the third holiest shrine of Islam stands in its place and the only remnant of the Temple are the massive foundation stones built to form a level plain for the Temple. They call it the "Wailing Wall" and people around the world pray there and hope for the day when the Temple returns.

There will be another visitation

As we compare the words of Jesus with the rest of Scripture, the Bible makes it clear that there will be another visitation. The words, "Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again" are part of ancient liturgies of the church and Christ's return has been part of the church's confession since the beginning. When Christ lived on earth, we had God joining the human race. As He ascended to the right hand of God the Father, so He will also return to establish the Kingdom on earth. Christians live every day of their lives with the anticipation that they will see Christ face to face. How do we live as people ready for our visitation, however it may come? How do we manage our days so that Jesus will not have to weep over us as He did over that great city so long ago?

- Application

For an application to this, take a look at the preceding parable. In the parable our text three servants are given money to invest for their Master. The money, I believe, is the days of our lives and the gifts and abilities that we have. We can't keep them, what are we doing with them. The servants who invested wisely were ready when their Master came for them. I think one way to be like them is to "visit" Jesus daily in prayer. During your daily time of prayer and study envision yourself meeting with the Lord and review the day with Him during your prayer. How did your day go? What went well? What did not go well? How did you respond and is there anything that you wished you had done differently with the hours of your day? People who practice this are likely to be ready when they meet with the Lord face to face.

- Conclusion

On Palm Sunday we remember the Lord Jesus as He entered Jerusalem in triumph, only to be betrayed and crucified less than a week later. Even in the midst of His triumph, He wept and lamented that the great city did not recognize the time of their visitation, thus ensuring judgment a generation later. As Christians, we are to always be ready to meet the Lord, to be prepared for our visitation. Reviewing your day in daily prayer is one way to meet that challenge and always be ready.