

Look Deep, Then Look Far

⁴¹ And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴²saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side ⁴⁴ and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." Luke 19:41

If you were raised in the country, you may remember the kind of elation you experienced on those few trips when you're family went into the city. Those from the prairies especially know. Life on the Prairie is never an idyllic episode from Little House on the Prairie. And those in the countryside of Prince Edward Island know that their lives were far from an idyllic scene from Anne of Green Gables. They know that the sound track of their lives isn't composed by Roger's and Hammerstein, with frequent heart elating flourishes, but rather a sound track of silence interspersed perhaps by the frightening sound of some beast howling or maybe a worker in a field or at sea groaning. No stage lights illuminated their lives. We see nothing but impenetrable darkness on a moonless overcast night.

In Canada, those from the Prairies or the Homeland of Anne of Green Gables in the East or those from the Far North set their sights on Toronto. And those in Toronto, interestingly enough don't think of this as the destination end point. Those born here or those who have lived here a long time don't see a city. We see ourselves as living in neighborhoods of a city. We live in Thistletown or Hogtown or Cabbagetown or Greek Town. And so for those raised here, their sights are raised to somewhere else. Previous mayors of this city always seemed to be on a trip, returning from "world-class" cities and trying hard to transport those cities here.

Wherever people find themselves living, even though you as an outsider think it grand, the natives will be looking to somewhere else.

For every Jew that somewhere else was Jerusalem. It still is. A common greeting among them remains "Next year, in Jerusalem". And I suppose for every Jew in Jerusalem that somewhere else is Jerusalem Past. Perhaps they pin for the "Wise days of Solomon" or the "Grand days of David".

And so it was among the residents of Jerusalem in the days of Jesus. So they cried out in nostalgia for Jerusalem Past "Blessed are you Son of David". They cried out for all the old ineffectual paths to peace. Still what they had was beautiful. The grandeur of the Temple gleamed. The crowds cried out in Jubilation. And the disciples joined them. Palm Branches waved. Children sang. The triumphal march continued. "Hosanna. Hosanna in the Highest". "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord".

But as Jesus rounded the bend in the road and he looked down upon Jerusalem Present, He who had come from heaven, Jerusalem Future, knew what he saw were truly misguided souls

who “did not know what makes for true peace”. He saw a people looking to the past or to somewhere else or anywhere else except where true peace might be found; namely, himself. The King of Peace riding on a donkey, the animal of peace. It was a sign. Jesus was clearly labeled but they ignored him. Jesus is still clearly labeled as the source of peace but we are still tempted to look elsewhere.

Jesus saw beyond what we see as strength to see the mortality. He looked past their moment of superficial joy to look deep to see sin and then far into their future and saw death. He first saw physical death and destruction wrecked by Romans tearing down their beloved Temple. He would look even further, in chapters to come (Luke 21) and see Judgment Day and the second death in eternity to all without the fruits of righteousness. So the fig tree lay cursed as a testimony to such truth for all to see.

Jesus looked deep with a people’s sad misplaced desires for a past that never was. How he desired to get them to look deep to see that, and then look to him and look far into an eternal future to see their only hope for redemption. But they simply would not see. Jesus wept.

The people were looking to the past when they ought to have been looking to the future. And if they had of, they would have known that the King David, they so revered had been looking to the future king and city also. David had looked forward to the Messiah and now that Messiah who could take them to the true end point destination – Jerusalem the Golden – Jerusalem of Endless future had arrived. He was in the midst of them.

All the prophecies were fulfilled in Him. But they did not see. They had missed the time of visitation. Jesus wept.

Are we any different? Where are our sights set for our Happiness? Where are our sights set for finding true joy and peace? The boy on the Canadian Prairie so often sets his sights on Toronto. The boy in Toronto sets his sights on that multiple named and ever changing, elusive “world-class” city. The Jew looks to Jerusalem. The Muslim his Mecca. The Medieval Pilgrim his Rome. The Eastern European his Constantinople. But there is no peace and lasting happiness in any of these earthly destinations.

But Jesus would preach to Pontius Pilate “My Kingdom is not of this World”. And to the Jews and Gentiles throughout his 3 year public ministry Jesus preached “The Kingdom of God”. The Kingdom of God is in the midst of you! And the crowds looked up and they looked down. They saw an ordinary man. If only they had looked deeper, they would have seen a king and his Kingdom. They would have seen a priest bearing a sacrifice. They would have heard a true prophet with Words that can forgive the true source of all discord which is sin, soothe and then create peace with joy no one can take away. If only they would have looked deeper they would have seen the true Messiah who bears peace.

Really they didn’t have to look all that deep. The Messiah wasn’t exactly hiding. He came with signs and wonders. He came so even a little child could have faith in him. Jesus spoke of even

the little ones who had faith in him. And faith would be powerful because “it is the righteous who live by faith”. It is true righteousness or holiness bestowed by this King, priest and sacrifice all, that gives confidence. In this confidence, the Messiah would bring contentment and peace and true joy. He would bring the gift of an eternal kingdom.

God’s grace rained down upon the peoples. Truly they were without excuse. What more could he do. He had done all things well. Even the most patient teacher would have the right to lose patience by this point and walk on and move on. But Jesus didn’t exercise that right. He saw the people for what they were, blinded. They were not just blinded by city lights. They were blinded by the god of this age.

In their case the **god** of this world has **blinded** the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of **God**.
[2 Corinthians 4:4](#)

Do we see our unsaved neighbours with such compassion? Jesus had mercy. Jesus wept. Jesus weeps over the souls He as creator creates. Jesus weeps over you and me. Jesus loves me. Jesus loves you also. It is a love proven as he moved on to Jerusalem to die. He would die to make men holy. He would die to make us free.

Behold the cross.

If heaven is the goal that should ever be on our minds Sunday by Sunday (as I mentioned last week) it is the cross which sums up the love of Jesus that should be on our minds Sunday by Sunday as the means to our goal. The death of Christ and the love of Christ are applied to us in baptismal waters where we participate in His death. The death of Christ and the love of Christ are applied to us also in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper where we partake of his body and his precious blood.

We have such means granted to us today. Shouldn’t we weep in the face of so great a love? More than that, shouldn’t our lives be somehow made different? The one who has clearly loved us, should enable and compel us to love our neighbor. Have mercy upon our neighbor. Weep over the salvation of our neighbor.

We are a people born to a restless wandering because we are a people born in sin. We look everywhere to ease that restlessness. We might look to some major city. If we have already arrived we look to that city as it was in some past period of greatness which we seek to recreate. If we were Jews in the days of Jesus we would have looked to Jerusalem and the re-establishment of the Davidic Monarchy. But peace, contentment and happiness is not to be found in any of these earthly means and destinations. It is only found in Christ and His Kingdom. To see those frantically seeking everywhere else except to Himself Jesus wept. Jesus wept “for they did not know what makes for peace”. We have been told once again today in the epistle. It is the righteousness of Christ. It is righteousness lived by faith. It is a righteousness applied through Word and Sacrament. It is a righteousness that leads to the

Eternal Kingdom. May we look deep to see our sin that we may then turn to look far to see the Saviour and our Heavenly Home, our New Jerusalem coming down this day. May we direct others to look deep and then look far.

Amen.