

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 9, 480, 434, 13

THE INTROIT

(Ps:55:1,16-19,22)

P: As for me, I will call upon God; and He shall hear my voice;

C: He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me.

P: God shall hear and afflict them, even He that abideth of old;

C: Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.

P: Give ear to my prayer, O God;

C: and hide not Thyself from my supplication.

The COLLECT

O God, who declarest Thine almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity, mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy grace that we, running the way of Thy commandments, may obtain Thy gracious promises and be made partakers of Thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 7:1-7 (NKJV)

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!’ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words, saying, ‘The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.’”

For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.””

THE GRADUAL

(Ps.17:2,8;88:1)

P: Keep me, O Lord, as the apple of the eye:

C: hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.

P: Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence:

C: let Thine eyes behold the things that are equal. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: O Lord God of my salvation:

C: I have cried day and night before Thee. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

The EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NKJV)

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make

known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Ps. 119:124)

P: Hallelujah! O Lord, deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy and teach me Thy statutes. I am Thy servant, give me understanding:

C: **that I may know Thy testimonies. Hallelujah!**

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Luke 19:41-48 (NKJV)

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "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. 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."

Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

Jeremiah 7:1-7 — "Amend Your Ways and Your Doings"

INTRODUCTION

I. HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD

II. AMEND YOUR WAYS AND YOUR DOINGS

III. THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD ARE THESE

CONCLUSION

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 9, 480, 434, 13

Jeremiah 7:1-7 — “Amend Your Ways and Your Doings”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The sermon text is the Old Testament reading appointed for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity, Jeremiah 7:1-7:

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!’ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words, saying, ‘The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.’”

For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.”

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

In today’s Gospel reading we heard the LORD Jesus cry out, saying, **“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.”** Then He said in connection with this, **“It is written, ‘My house is a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”**

Who can count the times that this has happened to the house of the LORD? Our text from Jeremiah warns against the same thing. Here the LORD warns against the false security of thinking that simply claiming to be a Christian and coming to the place appointed for worship will be pleasing to God and save a person. Here the LORD warns against trusting in lying words. Here He calls the people of God to repentance, to turn again to hear the Word of the LORD and to amend their ways and their doings. Let us hear again how this can be even for us.

I. HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!’”

Where does the LORD command His prophet to stand and cry out? **“Stand in the gate of the LORD’s house!”** And what does the LORD command His prophet to proclaim? **“Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!”**

Certainly this should get our attention. Yes, this certainly should get OUR attention!

The LORD is not calling out to the world to listen but to the Church. He is calling out to those who regularly gather in the name of the LORD. He is calling to those who have the name of God placed upon them. He is calling to all who have the Scriptures and who gather to hear and to read and to study.

As we gather in the name of the LORD, as we gather to receive God’s blessing, He calls to us and says, **“Hear the Word of the LORD!”**

Why? After all, why else would we come to the LORD’s house?

Do we really come to hear the Word of the LORD? Is that really our motivation? Is that really what our hearts desire? Do we really hear Him? Do we really listen to Him?

How often do our hearts wander? How often do we find that even as we pray the Our Father that our thoughts turn elsewhere? How often do we sing the liturgy and the hymns without even hearing the words with our spirits? Are we more concerned about getting the notes right? Are we more concerned with how we may sound to those who hear us? Are we more concerned about whatever noises we hear from outside the walls of this house of worship? Are we more concerned with what another worshiper is doing? Are we more concerned about what things we will be doing later in the day or even later in the week or perhaps what we did earlier in the week? Are we more concerned about a bill that needs to be paid or how to increase our income? Are we more concerned about how someone has treated us this past week or month or year?

Do we really hear the Word of the LORD?

In our preparations for this day of the LORD, have our hearts been focused upon the reason that He gave the command, **“Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy”**? Have we been mindful of what it means that we should not take the name of the LORD in vain? Have we remembered that we are to have no other gods before Him? Are we really gathering together this morning with the Word of the LORD as our one true desire? Are we intent on hearing the Word of the LORD?

Have we gathered simply because it is a good habit? Have we gathered because we think that it is our duty? Have we gathered because we would feel guilty if we did not do so? Have we gathered truly to hear the Word of the LORD?

II. AMEND YOUR WAYS AND YOUR DOINGS

Now that we have heard the call to hear the Word of the LORD, do we feel guilty? Or is it possible that we feel a certain amount of resentment?

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the

word of the LORD, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!’ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.’

Here we are, gathered in the name of the LORD, gathered according to the way that He has commanded, and yet we hear the command to hear the Word of the LORD and to amend our ways and our doings. It seems that we react to this in one of two primary ways, and perhaps a third way that we don’t even recognize.

The first way is to wonder why on earth the LORD’s servant is speaking to us in this way. After all, aren’t we the faithful ones? We are not lying in bed or out fishing or golfing or some other activity. We are gathered in the house of the LORD. We have bowed down together before the LORD and we have obediently and contritely confessed our sins and have received the words of absolution. We have sung the liturgy and hymns. We have stood apart from other so-called Christians who do not embrace the true theology and practice. So why is the LORD’s servant chastising us?

The second reaction that we may have is to feel guilty and to think that we must change. We then begin to plot out the ways that we should do better. We begin to imagine ways to be more attentive in our prayers. We begin to imagine ways to stop our wandering thoughts. We begin to focus more and more on what we must do to be good and faithful worshipers. We begin to think and to think of ways that we can amend or make good our ways and our thoughts and our words and our deeds.

The third is that we may ignore the servant of the Word and go on without any reaction at all.

None of these three reactions is good. None of these is holy. None of these is what the LORD commands His servant to proclaim. None of these is what the LORD wants for us.

What does He say? He says, first and foremost, **“Hear the Word of the LORD!”** This is what is meant by the command to amend our ways and our doings. After all, what is wrong with our ways and our doings in the first place? The issue is that our ways and our doings are OUR ways and OUR doings. Whose way is the way for those who hear the Word of the LORD? Whose doings are the doings of those who hear the Word of the LORD? Most especially, in the LORD’s house, whose way and whose works are the way and the doings of this house?

This week I heard on the radio a song that repeated the words,

**Change, change
Lord please help me to change
Change, change
I need You, Lord
Help me to change**

Is this not often how we pray? But is this what the LORD says? When we pray like this, are we really hearing the Word of the LORD?

Consider how the Lord Jesus, the Word of the LORD, teaches us to pray:

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom

come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Does the Lord Jesus teach us to pray for help to change or does He teach us to pray that we would be changed? You see, the change that the Word speaks is the change that the Word works. When we pray for the LORD to help us to change, we are only trusting in God for help and are not really relying upon Him to save us. When we pray, **“Lord, please help me to change,”** we are still relying upon our own reason and strength and are only looking to God for a bit of a push in the right direction or a bit of an extra bit of power so that we can change for the better.

But the amendment or change for the better is not something that we can do. For we are sinful by nature. We are unwilling according to our own reason and strength to do anything that is pure. We are unwilling to let go of those things that seem so precious in this world. We are unwilling to let go completely of those things that separate us from God. We are unwilling and unable to make the complete change of heart, mind, and soul that restores us to a true relationship of faith in God alone and in no one else, most especially not in ourselves and our own efforts.

The change that God calls for is the crucifixion and resurrection of Baptism and the regular renewing of faith and forgiveness of the Holy Communion. These are things that we cannot do for ourselves. These are the Word of God connected to earthly elements by which God causes us truly to hear His Word and to receive His ways and His doings. By these means we hear Him proclaim that we are powerless to change ourselves, and that He alone is strong to save and to redeem and to regenerate us.

When we hear this then we no longer react with resentment or guilt or ignorance. When we hear this, we truly hear the Word of the LORD and He changes us so that His ways are now our ways and His doings are received as our doings. Then we walk in His ways and live by His doings. Then we no longer even think about what way to choose and what things to do. Then we simply walk by faith, trusting that Jesus is the Way and that what He has done and continues to do is what is good for our lives. Then we hear Him say, **“Well done!”** and we wonder what on earth we have done well, for all that we see and hear is what He has done for us and among us.

Truly, this is a change for the better. Truly this is amending our ways and our doings.

III. THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD ARE THESE

But even this becomes corrupted when we stop hearing the Word of the LORD and begin to plan our own ways again and to do for ourselves again. Thus the warning is sounded forth:

Do not trust in these lying words, saying, ‘The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.’

Even the means of grace are meaningless and powerless for those who turn them into their own works of righteousness or works that are good for their own sake. The means of grace are powerful only because of the Word of the LORD. The means of grace do not grant us God’s grace on account of us partaking of them. Rather, we partake of them because they grant us

God's grace through faith. Faith is the power at work. Faith is powerful because it is God's work.

From where do the Scriptures teach us that faith comes?

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)

Do you understand why the LORD commands His servant to stand in the gate of the LORD's house and to call out to those who enter, "**Hear the Word of the LORD**"?

Repentance is not in any way about what we do for ourselves. Repentance is what God does for us and in us. It is what happens when we truly hear the Word of the LORD. The Word takes root in the soil of our souls and grows up into faith which converts us from unbelievers into believers. The Word is what produces faith. The Word is what converts the soul. The Word is what gives life and salvation. This Word became flesh and tabernacled among us and was crucified for us and rose from the dead for us and ascended to the right hand of God for us and lives and reigns to all eternity for us. This Word comes to us in water and bread and wine and joins Himself to us and changes us.

Thus we come to the Temple of the New Testament in Christ's blood. We come to the house of prayer, where Word of the LORD is spoken in the liturgy and in the preaching and in connection with water to be poured over us once and for all so that we then may come forward with all boldness in the unity of the bread and in the forgiveness and life of the cup.

This is what the Word of the LORD declares and commands for our benefit. This is the change that the Word of the LORD works for us.

CONCLUSION

This is why the LORD declares that He desires mercy and not sacrifice. (Hosea 6:6)

God's mercy is the key to our hearing the Word of the LORD rightly. When we truly hear the Word of the LORD, we hear mercy and not sacrifice. What sacrifice can we possibly offer that is of any help? In His mercy, God made the only sacrifice that has value and power. He sent forth His Word and salvation was born to us. "**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.**" (Matthew 17:5)

Yes, we are to hear the Word of the LORD so that we may amend our ways and our doings. Our ways and our doings are what the Word of the LORD calls us to set aside and to sacrifice. He calls us to let go of our ways and to turn away from our doings, so that He may set us upon His paths so that we may walk in the works that He has prepared for us beforehand.

When we hear the Word of the LORD we hear the way of grace, mercy, and peace. When we hear the Word of the LORD we are set free to live by faith. This is what God has established that we are to hear. This is the change to which God calls us. This is the change that He works and credits to us as righteousness. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds

in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.