

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Quincy, IL  
Rev. Martin Eden

Pentecost 23  
Saturday, November 12, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, November 13, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

# “Christ is our Foundation”

Luke 21:5-28

The Temple in Jerusalem was quite a sight to behold. The Western side of the gigantic platform on which it was built is now known as the “Wailing Wall” and stands nine stories tall from its foundation. Massive stones were quarried and the entire platform which was built for the 90ft. by 30ft. cedar temple building and its sprawling courtyards – the platform was the size of about 23 football fields. It took more than 40 years to construct. It was very impressive. It still is.

But the platform, the foundation is all that is left. Jesus is quick to remind His disciples that the noble stones and impressive trappings of the Temple can be, and will be, easily thrown down. That would be a shocking statement. We cannot imagine a building like our church one day being flattened by war. Jesus’ words were shocking, yet that Temple would be burned to the ground about 40 years later in 70 AD. We watch the news and see entire towns flattened by war, churches are destroyed, and Christians are persecuted and even killed in many countries throughout the world. Jesus tells His hearers that this should be expected.

When you turn on the news and see the devastation and desolation of entire cities and regions; when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, just remember that Jesus told us this would happen. And this Great Tribulation

happening in the world has been happening since Adam defied God and ate of the forbidden fruit. We should not expect one stone to be sitting upon another. Every day that you live in peace is an undeserved gift from God. Thank God we are not seeing these things in Quincy right now. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ in places like Ukraine who have seen the devastation similar to that of which Jesus speaks.

On another occasion, Jesus speaks of another stone – a lasting stone that cannot be broken. He reminds His hearers of what Scripture says, “The stone the builder rejected has become the capstone.”

Christ is the stone the builders of the Temple rejected. The problem with the Temple was not that it was built with grand and glorious “noble” stones. Just like the problem with the Pharisees and Sadducees was not that they came from wealthy or privileged families. Wealth and honor are gifts from God – something for which we should be daily thankful. The problem was what they did with those gifts and what they believed and taught others to believe.

The presence of a glorious temple in Jerusalem should have been a good thing. The “noble stones” and offerings adorning the Temple mount should have been a perpetual testimony to the goodness and nobility of God Himself – but it wasn’t.

When Jesus cleared the Temple of the moneychangers and the sellers of animals, He rightly called it a “den of robbers.” The chief priests themselves did not believe the Word of God and rejected the promise of the resurrection. They did not believe in heaven or hell. They said that when you are dead, you are dead, but you live forever in the memory of your children and all the generations that follow. Isn’t that nice? I mean “WOW” what a great hope that is.

The so-called spiritual leaders, the priests in Jesus’ day said there was no

resurrection. Jesus comes and says, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Truly “the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.” The capstone is the stone at the top of an arch which holds everything in place and distributes the weight properly. If you remove the capstone, the entire structure will fall down.

The Temple in Jerusalem built under King Herod was eventually destroyed, just as King Solomon’s Temple was destroyed 600 years earlier. Those buildings were magnificent feats of architecture. They were built to last forever. They came to a disastrous end.

The Good News of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of the resurrection found in the Word of God must be the strength of the temple. If Christ is not the foundation, a Temple, a church, a person will come to a disastrous end. Just because some thing or some one has the noble appearance of godliness does not mean that everything is right with God. Remember a few years ago when the Crystal Cathedral went bankrupt. When I was growing up, who would have imagined that to be possible? The reality is that they were “bankrupt” long before their financial statements said so.

In Jesus’ day, in the eyes of the people, Herod’s Temple was a big success. But not in God’s eyes. Who could imagine that God would allow the Temple to be torn down? Jesus certainly knew what was going to happen. He even uses that as a metaphor for His own death and resurrection.

God does not reside in a Temple built by human hands, for what building can contain Him? But He has chosen to reside in a temple nonetheless – you are His temple. The Temple of Solomon and the Temple of Herod were built to last forever. They came to a disastrous end because those worshiping at those temples had abandoned God.

The Good News of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of the

resurrection was not the strength of the Temple in Jerusalem, because the builders of that Temple had rejected Christ, the cornerstone, the capstone, the firm foundation.

Adam was created with the intent for him to live forever. Sin brought about the disastrous end called death. But because the promise of Christ was given to him immediately there in the garden after he sinned – that promise became his new foundation, because that Good News became the strength of him, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of the resurrection which must be the strength of the temple. Adam has lived and will live forever in the presence of his Father, only because his Father sent the Second Adam.

From the beginning, God intended for you to live forever. But the sin of Adam and your sin was going to bring about a disastrous end. Christ has intervened. He endured the disastrous end for you – your condemnation, the wrath of judgment under the Law for your sin, and the pain of death.

Christ came to make all things new. The Good News of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of the resurrection found in the Word of God must be the strength of you – for you are the temple of God's Holy Spirit.

Because of sin, there is nothing noble, stately, or majestic about any of us apart from our relationship with God, as the hymn writer says, "The Church's One foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord." He is the stone that gives us strength. Without Him, everything falls apart. The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. With Christ as our foundation, we are His church and have been built to last forever. Amen.