

“It Is Necessary”

Luke 13:31-35

When we were in Jerusalem, every night I would walk out onto the balcony outside my hotel room, and I would look across the city and watch the traffic go by. And I would quote Jesus' words, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you. How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.”

As you look out over the landscape of Jerusalem and see all of the churches and all of the religious activity – and yet there are very few Christians. Our tour guide Johnny estimates that in another 10-20 years, there will be no Christians living in the Old City.

For generations, God has sent His messengers to Jerusalem. This city should be the epicenter of the most faithful. Yet, this is the place where the prophets of God go to die. Jesus says, “It cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.” Jesus tells these Pharisees what He had often told His disciples – that it is for this reason that He will go to Jerusalem.

He is a prophet, and in Jerusalem He will be killed. To this point in His ministry, Jesus has been conducting His activity according to His prophetic office. He has been preaching and performing miracles.

The signs and wonders performed in Galilee demonstrated that He is from God. After all, who has power to heal the blind and the lame and raise the dead except for God? He has lived as a prophet; He will die as did the prophets before Him – in Jerusalem.

This must happen. It is necessary. That is what we hear Jesus say, “I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following” (three days) there is some foreshadowing. This is no accident – especially because of how Jesus says this. He says, “I must.” In the Greek, the word is “dei” literally “It is necessary.” When you see this word in Luke’s Gospel, you know that Jesus is talking about His death, His sacrifice. In Luke chapters 9, 17, 22, 24, it is necessary that He suffers; it is necessary that He dies. It is necessary that He is more than a prophet. Jesus is also a Priest and a King.

Jesus would die like most all prophets die – at the hands of evil men in Jerusalem. However, His death would be according to God’s plan and it would be done willingly. This was a sacrifice. Jesus is our High Priest and He would pour forth a blood sacrifice that would cover all of our sin.

Because of the curses which come with sin brought on by Adam’s Fall – which we have been discussing in our Wednesday midweek services – Because the perfection of God’s creation has been lost (with this as our theme this Lenten season, I am thankful that we have Ruth Ann’s paintings of Creation Week surrounding us.) It is good to be reminded of what God intended for us in the beginning and what He

intends for us in the future. Please take the time to look at the paintings and read the Scripture. You cannot know the will of God without reading the Scripture.

Because of the curses brought on by Adam's Fall, the worst being the curse of death, Jesus comes as a prophet preaching good news. What is the good news? He says, "I perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course." Three days – again this is not an accident. This is foreshadowing. The word translated "finish my course" comes from the same word spoken on the cross, "It is finished."

We look at the death and resurrection as a single event. This is a Friday, Saturday, Sunday event. You can't separate Jesus death and resurrection. He "performs the cure today" the first day. He is nailed to the cross. He dies at Jerusalem like a prophet, but He offers a sacrifice like a priest.

That was the job of a priest. There must be a blood sacrifice to cover the sins of the people. And all the sheep and bulls and goats offered on the altar of the Lord could not do it. The sacrifices offered under the covenant with Moses were only foreshadowing. If the blood of critters could cover your sin, there is no need for the Son of God to enter the world. It is necessary for you and for me that the Son of God takes away the sin of the world, carries it to the cross, and gathers us together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing.

He covers you and protects you from the real danger, from the judgment of the Law. He gathers you as His children and covers you with His righteousness. It is necessary that we have this Priest who makes the sacrifice that we cannot make.

And Jesus says that none of this will take place, “you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’” The prophet will come to Jerusalem. The priest will make His sacrifice. But this will only happen after you welcome Him as the King – the rightful and eternal heir of King David’s throne.

On Palm Sunday, the King rides into Jerusalem amid the waving of palm branches and shouts of “Hosanna! Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest.”

The King comes to make a sacrifice as a Priest and die as a Prophet. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, so many messengers have been sent to preach the good news, so many churches have been built, so many have forsaken the Prophet, Priest, and King who has come.

This message is for Quincy also. Faithful pastors have been sent for generations; the good news has been proclaimed. So many, have forsaken the Prophet, Priest, and King who has come. As the children of Adam living under the curse of death, we look to our future; our body will be broken because of sin. It is necessary that we look to the broken body and shed blood of Christ. It is necessary that we look to the empty tomb. The good news, the Word of God is all around us, and it is necessary. Amen.