

Pastor Jordan Gades Sermon 11.17.19 Luke 21:5-19

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ
Amen.

We live in a complicated world. I think we can agree on that. There are just a few things going on that are nuanced and have lots of details and hard to explain easily. And the same thing is happening in our Gospel reading. Jesus and his followers and in Jerusalem at the temple, chilling before the Passover. And he is in the midst of people who love him and people that want to kill him. And to make things more complicated for us, he is surrounded by things that are common place knowledge for Jews 2,000 years ago but really don't make a lot of sense to us who are living here in northern Minnesota 2 millennia later. It's into this world that Jesus says these startling words about the end. And we are left trying to figure out what they mean and how to understand them today. So to do that there's something I wanted to focus in on today, something hopefully understandable, something to frame this story and prophesy that Jesus lays down. So I'm hoping we can talk about the temple.

First thing, they ask Jesus what does he think about the temple? Now they might be asking a lot in that one question. The temple that Jesus is sitting in front is supposed to be a mere echo of this majesty of God and God's kingdom. It's spectacular. It's a wonder to behold. It's just been renovated and looks incredible. The temple is a tiny tiny tiny glimpse of what the kingdom of God was supposed to look like. Like God's true kingdom does look like. So that's what these people talking about. This building which supposed to represent some of the very aspects of God. It's beautiful; a reminder of God's kingdom. it was there to illicit a response. Our God is worthy of this show of respect. God of creation. God of beauty and wonder and all of these things that blow us away on a daily. Same types of things taken in when they design churches. Much like this church. With its vaulted ceiling and stained glass and beautiful ornate pieces that decorate this sanctuary. Seating for the people to come together around the altar, places to gather and be fed. Be reminded of God. and In fact, the temple goes even further than just a church. it is supposed to be the very and **only** place that the presence of God manifests. In the Holy of Holies, God is there.

Are we starting to respect the temple a little more? It is more then we realize. The Temple is also a center of the entire Jewish country and culture. Only place they worship God. They are required to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the remembrance of what God has done for them, 300,000 to 400,000 a year. The temple is the hub upon which all of Judaism turns. Without it the wheel breaks and goes flying off. This place holds together this people when nothing else does.

Feel like your understanding the temple a little more? How big you ask? This temple is meant to represent the God of the universe. Its huge! 150 feet high 750 feet long 150 wide. The temple mount 1600 feet by 900 ft. there are blocks of stone over 100 tons, the walls are 16 feet thick! This place is huge! Huge! 50 yards wide, 2 and a half football fields long! We can't picture this in our heads!

This temple making a little more sense? It connects past to present to future. This recent astounding remodel that this whole conversation is under is brand new but this temple is only a little over 300 years old. It's actually the 2nd temple. The 1st was destroyed after 700 years of existence. These aren't tiny amounts of time. We barely have a handful of buildings in the US that are over 300 years old. Let alone 700. Sense of the ancient mixed in. God of the ages present in this building, ancient bedrock of the faith, barely worn smooth. The temple has been in place for a thousand years and it's so big so immovable that nothing will be able to change that for eons to come

So are we all understanding just a little bit about the temple? This is a big deal! This place covered from floor to ceiling with Gold and tapestries. With priceless gems adorning this house of the Lord. And Jesus says to all of this, well it's going to be destroyed. This epicenter of the worship of Yahweh, of God will be completely and utterly destroyed. And Jesus must have said this almost flippantly. That's the way he says in my head. What do I think of all this majesty and wealth and power? It means almost nothing when compared with God. And here is where all this try to understand gets turned upside down.

All of **this** pales in comparison with God. the work of humanity is pales in light of the works of God. We are the called and redeemed people of God. and this is our heritage and our legacy. We stand against the "culture of the law". A culture of our own strength and our own acts. A culture that say we are worth only what the numbers on a bank account say or how many buildings we have named after us. We stand against pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps because if you cared and loved someone why would you put them through that? We stand because we have been lifted up in grace. We do not stand with our own strength, but rather by the strength we have been given and the support we receive.

So we trust in God or do we trust in this world? Do we trust in what God can do or what we can do?

Jesus is standing here in the midst and height of human accomplishment and saying do not trust in this. Trust in God. Trust in me. Trust in the certainty I bring. All things change, all things end, but Not GOD. Trust in the immutable, unchanging Lord who has always stood next to you and has

promised to do so forever. This world will be redeemed and remade. But it will not be simple, it will not be easy. It is time to trust God and do the hard things that are set before us. Amen