

April 10, 2022 – Luke 19:29-48

There's a famous passage in the Book of Ecclesiastes. One that has been quoted countless times by everything from secular musicians to world leaders. It's from chapter 3 and it goes, *“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die... a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance... a time to keep silent, and a time to speak... a time for war, and a time for peace.”*

There's a time for everything. Our lives are not always going to be joyful, nor are they always going to be sorrowful. There will be times of health and life and times of sickness and death. Life is always changing. We are always changing.

And yet, of course, Solomon is saying this to contrast our mortality and change against God's immortality and unchanging character. We are fleeting. He is eternal. We have times and seasons that begin and end. He has an eternity with no beginning and no end.

Except, of course, in the incarnation. Where, for a brief moment in time, God took on our mortal nature. Where the eternal Lord had a beginning in a virgin's womb and an end on the cross of Calvary. Where the God of all eternity had a time to be born. A time to die. And a time to rise again.

But these times and seasons of Jesus' life weren't always when his disciples expected them. In our Gospel lesson for today, they enter into Jerusalem thinking it is a time to laugh. A time to dance.

Jesus is making his grand entrance into Jerusalem after all. He hasn't been there for over a year now. His entire ministry thus far has been focused on Galilee to the north. Galilee is a nice enough place and all. Almost all of the disciples are natives of Galilee.

But Galilee is also a rural area. It's off the beaten path. It's full of farmers and fishermen. It's got plenty of people to minister to. But if you want recognition, you gotta go to Jerusalem. And Jesus has spent months refusing to go to Jerusalem.

In a way, that's understandable. Jesus' main opposite is in Jerusalem. Walking into the city at this point is kinda like picking a fight with them. The Pharisees and religious leaders can put up with Jesus' little movement when its up in Galilee. But if he's going to bring it to the big city. Well, that's their turf.

And so this is a dangerous move. Everybody knows that. But, at the same time, the disciples are excited about it. They know this represents a big step forward. And several of them sound like they want a fight. It may be foolish. It may be reckless. It may be doomed to failure. But the disciples are ready. And if this is a time for war, then bring it on.

And so, as they leave the Mount of Olives and head toward Jerusalem, you notice, it isn't Jesus nor is it the people of Jerusalem who begin the shouting and the dancing and the waving of palm branches. It's the disciples. They want to enter Jerusalem guns blazing. If they're going to be arrested by the chief priests, well then they're going to make the biggest scene that they can in the process.

And so they begin shouting. Shouting all of the things they know to be true because they have witnessed the mighty works that Jesus has done. Which also just happen to be all of the things that the Pharisee's hate to hear the most.

*“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”* They are proclaiming, unabashedly, that Jesus is a new king. Sent from God. Bringing the peace of heaven to earth. And worthy of the highest glory. The glory of God himself. The disciples are proclaiming everything that the Pharisees don't want people to think about Jesus. This is a time for war with the Pharisees and a time for peace with God.

And it provokes a reaction. "*Teacher, rebuke your disciples,*" they demand. But Jesus isn't intimidated by them. "Why would I rebuke them? They're right. If they didn't say it, the rocks would cry out." Jesus may not have started this procession. But now that's it's started, he's not going to let the Pharisees stop his disciples from speaking the truth. This is not a time to be silent. This is a time to speak.

No, Jesus let's his disciples have this moment of celebration. He lets them have this time of laughter. This time of dancing. This time of speaking against the Jewish authorities. This time of war against the Pharisees. All the way up until they reach Jerusalem. And then he looks at the city, sitting there in front of them. And that time quickly comes to an end for Jesus.

Because now it is a time to mourn. A time to weep. Because there's work to do. And Jesus can see the final season of his earthly life approaching. He can see the next week unfold before him. A week of teaching. A week of fellowship. A week of prayer. A week of suffering. A week of death. And a week of resurrection.

But more than that, he can see the next century unfold. As the Romans clamp down harder and harder. As the people of Jerusalem suffer more and more. As his own disciples are ripped from their homes and sent to Asia and Africa and Europe. As the temple of God is torn apart, stone by stone. Until there's nothing left but a pile of rubble.

Jesus can see that, and he can see the next two thousand years unfold. As the Church grows and grows and grows. Even in the midst of persecution. Even in the midst of false teaching. Even in the midst of popes and heretics and corruption. And then, suddenly, meets the wall of modernism and post modernism and atheism. And the world that we have around us today.

Where wisdom is silenced and the foolish lead. Where sin reigns in the public square and temptation sits on every screen for children to see. Where greed and lust, hate and pride, are taught as good and righteous, while faith and family are regarded as unwanted and unnecessary.

Jesus looks ahead, surrounded by palm branches and cheering crowds, and he sees us. Sitting in church today. And he mourns. He weeps. He weeps for a sinful world. That refuses to listen to his message. That seeks peace in all the wrong places. That finds itself, like the temple of Jerusalem, torn apart by its own sinfulness. And then carried off into the exile of death and hell.

Jesus looks ahead. He sees Jerusalem. He sees us. And he weeps. Because there is only one solution for all this. And isn't a time to dance. It isn't a time to laugh.

No, for Jesus, it's a time to die. To die on a cross. That is the one and only solution to the world's sinfulness. That is the one and only solution to our sinfulness. For him to be that temple, torn apart stone by stone, brick by brick. Torn apart until it's a pile rubble on the ground. Torn apart... and then rebuilt on the third day.

So that we may have a time to be born. To be reborn. Reborn by his blood shed on the cross. Reborn by water and the Spirit in Holy Baptism. Reborn to a life that never ends. Jesus' time to die was our time to be born again.

And so today, even as we enter upon a week in which we take time to mourn and time to weep over our Lord's death, we do so looking ahead to an even greater time of laughter and dancing. The laughter and dancing of Easter morning. The laughter and dancing of a stone rolled back and an empty tomb. The laughter and dancing of our own promise of resurrection from the dead.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. The disciples that first Palm Sunday had no idea what season they were entering into. What that week would hold for them and for Jesus. They sang their hosannas in ignorance of what was in store.

We know what season we are in. We're in the season of the church. Of Christ's church. A season of sin and temptation and persecution. But also a season of repentance and forgiveness and good news. A season in which we wait expectedly for our king to come to us, just as he came to Jerusalem that morning. And when he does a new season will begin. And it will last for all eternity. Amen.