

Stewardship

November 18, 2018

Our Savior's Way
Worshiping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM
Pastor Labuhn

When people come to visit Our Savior's Way, many like the look of our church. Its beauty stands out in our community with its stone columns, its dark wood interior, and the light that shines through the beautiful stain glass windows. Some know us as "the church on the corner with the beautiful stain glass windows." It draws people to this place so that we can form relationships with people since they often want to have their events here because of its beauty – they want to have recitals, have meetings, give concerts and get married here, not because of our faith, but rather because of the beauty of our church. We have a wonderful church building.

In our Gospel reading for today, we heard how one of Jesus' disciples once remarked about the beauty of the Temple in Jerusalem. He said, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" Yet Jesus says to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." And from history, we know that Jesus was speaking the truth when in 70 A.D. the Temple building in Jerusalem, was demolished by the Romans. Yet His prophecy is not quite complete, as we know from our reading, that He was also foreshadowing the end of time, which only seems appropriate today, because there is only one more Sunday left in the church liturgical calendar year.

Monuments and buildings often have significance to us. In fact, great buildings are often monuments themselves. They can symbolize what people hold to be most important. The core values

and beliefs of a people are often quite literally built into them. They often give the illusion of defying time. People often invest themselves in them as a way to defy time and even death, because they're seen as enduring. Life often goes into them and in return, people draw life from them.

One day, Henry Ford was once asked to donate money for the construction of a new medical facility. The billionaire made a pledge of \$5,000. But instead of \$5,000, the next day in the newspaper, the headline read, "Henry Ford contributes \$50,000 to the new hospital."

Irritated, Ford called the people who had organized the fundraiser and told them that he had been misunderstood. The organizers of the fundraiser replied that they could print a retraction in the paper the following day reading, "Henry Ford reduces his donation by \$45,000." Realizing the poor publicity that would result, Ford agreed to make the \$50,000 contribution under one condition. That above the entrance to the hospital was to be carved the biblical inscription: "I came among you and you took me in."

When Jesus and His disciples were in Jerusalem, they witnessed the temple reconstruction which began by Herod the Great in about 20 BC. The Temple was being built to be even larger and grander than Solomon's temple which had been destroyed long ago. Still, for the people the Temple Mount was the center of Jewish life and culture. It was the destination of many pilgrimages, where Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers, the center for Jewish worship, the place where Holy Scriptures were kept, and where the Sanhedrin – the Jewish High Council met. It was seemingly in a constant state of improvement, until shortly before its destruction.

Jesus, Himself, was brought before the whole Council - the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. Men testified to them that they heard Jesus say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days, I will build another, not made with hands." Yet, their testimony still did not agree, even though they got it right. So the high priest asked Jesus directly, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am, and you

will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” You see, Jesus came into the world and did away with the need for the Temple Mount. Through His life, death, and resurrection, He came into the world and became the chief cornerstone of the church in heaven and on earth. He ascended into Heaven and we look forward to the day when He will come again.

By Grace through faith in Christ alone, we have eternal life through Him. What makes our church so special isn't just its outward appearance but most importantly is the Word of God that dwells within it. For us, this is the best place where we experience Jesus together. Made up of people who are taught and baptized into His death and resurrection, He gives to us His Holy Spirit who keeps us in everlasting faith. Together as His people, we gather in this place and receive His very body and blood, in – with – and under – the bread and the wine. Through His love and forgiveness, we are renewed and have eternal life, because Jesus is what makes Our Savior's Way a church worthy as a place of worship.

Now many of us have already been planning for Thanksgiving. In doing so, some of us can get anxious about making sure that everything goes according to plan. So let me take just a minute to remind you that there is no reason to worry or to be anxious. While there may be troubles along the way, in the end, it will all come together the way it's supposed to come together. Before you begin eating, many of us will give thanks to God for the meal that has been prepared, for family and friends, for a home to share and our relations.

Soon, there will also be a time that we will enjoy a greater meal together. Not just around the Altar here at Our Savior's Way, but a meal that's been prepared for us in the new Jerusalem, where God Himself sits on the throne. It's there we will see Jesus face-to-face, we will enjoy the presence of those saints who have gone before us, and the streets and buildings will be even more magnificent, and face-to-face we will see our Lord and Savior Jesus.

Until that day comes, I would also like to encourage you to give thanks for the faith that we've been given and the life that we have through Jesus our Lord Jesus Christ. It's this life that we share with each other at Our Savior's Way, but it's also the life that we also share with others. And so, even though we may have troubles in this life as we live out our faith, all those monuments that we build in our name, the house that we call our own, our cars that we drive, the clothes that we wear, and even the place setting on the table, it won't matter. Since "you will be enriched in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God." (2 Corinthians 9:11)

Therefore, in the end, what will matter most, will be what kind of stewards we have been with the life that has been given to us. How in gratefulness we shared the time, talents and treasures given to us so that others might know Him and give thanks to God through Christ Jesus our Lord.

In Jesus Name, Amen.