

Lent 1C – Jesus Won the War so you can have Peace!

1. I am sure that like me, many of you have been glued to your TVs or the internet, for the latest news on the invasion of Ukraine
 - a. Our world has not seen anything like this since 1939 when Germany invaded then Czechoslovakia and Poland.
 - i. For those of you who lived through it I imagine recent days have brought bad memories and led you to draw comparisons
 - ii. The world stands on the verge of wider conflict and none of us have any assurances of how these events will be resolved
 - b. Just having come out of two years of COVID fears and isolation we're thrown into another international crisis
 - i. We have been privileged to live without the threat of world war for 30 years after the fall of the Soviet Union.
 - ii. After such a long time we can forget that war and conflict, along with all manner of suffering have been an ever-present reality since the Fall
2. But all of this violence, all of our suffering, all of our evil is only a symptom of the deeper core problem
 - a. It is the problem of sin, when Adam and Eve took the fruit in the Garden they broke God's perfect creation
 - i. That brought with it all manner of suffering, illness, plague, famine, war, and ultimately death.
 - ii. That's what God warned them about even before they sinned saying, **“but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”** (Gen 2:17)
 - iii. That was a problem too great to be solved by any human diplomacy, sanction, or campaign.
 - b. When Adam and Eve broke the creation it started a war, but not just a war between humans but rather a war between God and the one who tempted them to sin – Satan!
 - i. That war, that battle between good and evil, provides the context for the entirety of Scripture
 - ii. Throughout the OT we see the two sides fighting by proxies – God's chosen nation Israel vs powers that wanted to annihilate them – Egyptians, Canaanites, Babylonians, etc.
 - iii. But God preserved His chosen people through every onslaught because through them He was going to send a Savior for the whole world – One who would win the war!
 - iv. God would not win this war through proxies but by taking on human flesh and going to war Himself!

- c. In today's Gospel lesson we see the first battle between Jesus, God in flesh, and Satan.
 - i. Luke records, **"And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry."** (Luk 4:1-2)
 - ii. And even in His weakened state, hungry after a 40 day fast, He overcomes the temptations of the devil, something we were unable to do even in Paradise let alone now that we are compromised by sin.
 - iii. And as His ministry continued our Lord fought and won in enemy territory – healing the sick, making the blind see, the deaf hear, and casting out demons.
 - iv. Ultimately, in a move nobody could have anticipated He willingly gave His life as a sacrifice on the cross to pay for our sins and save us
- 3. All of this He did to win back His beloved creation, to restore hope to those who had no hope – Jesus won the war so that we can have peace!
 - a. We see an example of that promise of peace in our Psalm today, a Psalm made for dark and uncertain times like this
 - i. The Psalmist writes, **"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler."** (Psa 91:1-4)
 - ii. This is a Psalm of protection when we put our faith and trust in God He will be with us to give us strength and peace as the imagery of these verses reveal:
 - iii. Israel is not a terribly lush environment, not a lot of vegetation so to abide in the shadow of the Almighty is to have relief and protection just as we seek shade on a hot day.
 - iv. He covers us with His pinions and under His wings we find refuge is the kind of shelter a mother bird gives her young.
 - b. As the Psalmist goes on he says, **"You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday."** (Psa 91:5-6)
 - i. Our Lord doesn't promise that there will not be terrors or violence, but that He will be there with us that we need not fear that which terrifies the faithless.

- ii. The night before our Lord was crucified, He tried to prepare His followers for what was to come after Him, He told His disciples, **“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”** (Joh 16:33)
 - iii. When we survey the events of the world around us it would be easy to wonder whether God was in control, especially if we didn’t have His Word of assurance.
 - c. But our Lord promises us that despite what events in the world look like He is still in charge
 - i. He has told us to expect these things to happen in a broken world, but our inheritance is NOT of this world but the eternal life that comes after.
 - ii. Listen to Him as He teaches His disciples about the end times, **“Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven...some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.”** (Luk 21:10-11, 17-19)
 - iii. Sounds pretty familiar after the past few years, but just about every generation in the world has been able to say the same thing
 - d. Our Lord’s Word directs our eyes not to the horizon of this world but to heaven, our home, so that no matter what we’re facing here we have peace.
 - i. Listen to Paul in Rom 8, **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (Rom 8: 18,35,37-39)
 - ii. Beloved in Christ, take heart in these anxious times!
 - iii. Know that Jesus won the war so that you can have peace even now no matter what you face...that peace which the world cannot give!