**“Jerusalem, Jerusalem”**

Jeremiah 26:8-15

Philippians 3:17—4:1

Luke 13:31-35

 Lent 2, March 12/13, 2022

“O **Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!** How often I would have **gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings**, and **you would not!**”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

What Putin **underestimated** in his war on Ukraine is the **resolve of the Ukrainian people** … specifically the **resolve of their leader, President Zelenskyy**. He has **held his ground** … and the people have **followed** … and **all of that has captured the admiration of the world**. Because **he** dons military fatigues and risks, **citizens** do, and even **strangers not previously affiliated with the cause**. Putin anticipated a quick march with people surrendering **(thankful that he’d come to liberate them, rejoining the (quote) “mother land”**). But they did just **the opposite**. They **fought for values** of **independence** and **democracy** and **home**.

**Text**

It’s with a **tenderness** that we’re discovering in the Ukrainians that **Jesus’ tender humanity can strike us more today**. Not only was Jesus shown **determined to** **personally do battle with human enemies** (“casting out demons” and “curing people” even though warned to **abandon that** with Herod “wanting to kill” Him), but He’s noted as **expressing immense feeling toward the city, specifically, of “Jerusalem”**. “How often would I have” He **grieves and mourns what’s been an ongoing loss and missed opportunity that’s, for centuries, broken what is His, now, human heart**. He **wanted** **that place and people safely His**, “yet **they would not!**” Half of human history, by that time, been **His investment in that city / that spot and the significance of it and how its significance would radiate outward to everyone’s reverence there and security there and love there**.

**Kyiv** **hints at that kind of place for Ukraine’s president and his country’s people and the western world**. For whatever protective reason at the moment, Russia’s military is **somewhat stuck** into a 40-mile-long **holding pattern** just north of Ukraine’s capital. Where it’s been more successful elsewhere in the country, **here at Kyiv** its advances have (to date) stalled in a way that gets me thinking of God’s angelic army **visibly** protecting around the walls of Jerusalem.

God had made that city (Jerusalem) a **fortress**. From the moment that He identified Mount Mariah (**that place**) for peace and forgiveness and deliverance to Abraham, He **sanctuaried Himself there / bound Himself there** to a special presence and care, a “hen’s guardianship of love under her wings”. God **“templed” Himself there** and put His own “**face**” there (as He called it). Into that city built on that hill He laid claim … and would provide everything, including an **appropriate sacrifice to save the world**.

And it became the **capital (and core) of the Promised Land** because it was **there** that God’s blessings got **bestowed from (outward from where His bestowal of Himself was most concentrated for the world … eventually the cross)**. And evangelism meant **people brought there**, and trips to “**gather**” were certainly commissioned outward, but that commission was to gather all peoples to the **Temple in Jerusalem … there (now cross) centered**.

I’d heard (this week) of a poll that asked Americans if **they’d stay and fight defending this country under attack … or would we “abandon” and (I guess) leave**. **38% polled** said that **they’d leave, only 55% would stay and fight / defend** … the rest undecided.

**Jerusalem** (before ever become undefended by God, allowing an enemy attack) had abandoned home and identity countless time leading up to it. Finally, an entirely split country with differing worship concepts in the northern majority of it (10 of the 12 national tribes) abandoned **Jerusalem and God**. By almost 900 years before the Lord’s incarnation, Jerusalem’s centrality had waned and, itself, was firmly corrupt.

So Jesus said that He **mourned** and, even, **regretted** Jerusalem’s failure to stay cared-for and protected (safe and secure beneath His wings). From His **divinity**, this **disappointment** had been centuries in expression (over and over again, and regular and ongoing) through most of the entirety of that nation’s history. **Human also by nature** at the time of our reading in Luke, Jesus **reflected that** … and **showed Himself** **heart-broken by it**. He **wept over Jerusalem** … over the “**destroying and ruins of everything in the sanctuary**” as our Introit Psalm quote Him.

## Application

So where are **we** in all of this? Are **we** a, perhaps, protected nation literally “under God”, so that same “Jerusalem” and Temple / God’s face, and expected / protected to stay that way and act like it? Have **we**, though, “destroyed or destroying and bringing to ruins everything that’s God’s sanctuary”? Does the (now forever-combined divinity and humanity of Christ Jesus) weep frustrated and disappointed **in us**? Do **we** break (have we broken) His human heart?

The answer is (without **His** intervention and strength of character / sacrifice) we absolutely would frustrate and disappoint Him (God) … we’d break the human heart of the divine Son. And yet **mercy and grace** and His Zeal for what is Jerusalem **in us** is the **Lenten story**. It was **for us and the “Jerusalem”** (that **we’re** **supposed to BE and cherish and ever-defend**) that Jesus was directed and concerned at the time of the Gospel reading. “I must **finish My course**”, He said. “Tell that fox, Herod, that **I go on My way today and tomorrow … and the third day I finish My course**, for it cannot be that a prophet **perish** **away from Jerusalem**”. It was **to Jerusalem** and **for Jerusalem** (and even **the Jerusalem that is our name, each one of us individually**) that Jesus went to “**perish**”.

Jerusalem is still very much **a city**. It’s the city where the Lord’s “face” and presence and special blessing **reside / were placed, everything Good flowing from IT**. It’s the “face” and presence of the Resurrected One saying, then, “Lo, I will be with **My Church / My own people / you** always, until the end of the age”. That **city** is worth fighting for and defending and cherishing. Let’s do that (fight for and defend / cherish Him / Jesus for and with us as Jerusalem, with a **fervor** maybe (let’s call it “**zeal**”) that **this world could notice**. In +Jesus’ name. Amen.