

Behold Jesus' Boundless Love!

- I. His love takes Him to a certain death.
- II. His love mourns those who reject Him.
- III. His love gives eternal hope to those who believe in Him.

Dear Christian friends,

Did you catch the melancholy tone in today's readings – the FRUSTRATION and **disappointment**? We heard Jesus' sorrowful lament over Jerusalem. Paul **"with tears"** acknowledged the SAD FACT that **"many live as enemies of the cross of Christ."** Then **Jeremiah** – there he was preaching GOD'S Word in God's house to God's chosen people – and they're calling for his life.

Frustration – **disappointment** – rejection are a PART of life – ALSO in the **Lord's work**. It's still true that **"many live as enemies of the cross of Christ."** There are still many who want NOTHING TO DO with God or church. People still walk away from God – still have NO TIME for God or His Word. They CAN FIND TIME for all kinds of things – there are some things they JUST WOULDN'T miss – but church or **devotions** aren't on that list. It's STILL EASY to get frustrated and **discouraged** as we serve and share our Savior.

AS ALWAYS today's readings deal with reality. But **in the gloom** did you notice something SHINING so bright? Look at the LOVE our God – a love ever searching – **ever reaching** out – to **save** sinners. In these verses BEHOLD JESUS' BOUNDLESS LOVE! Jesus' **boundless love** 1) takes Him to a **certain death** – it 2) mourns those who **reject** Him and it 3) gives eternal hope to those **who believe** in Him.

I. His love takes Him to a certain death.

EVEN AS WE are slowly making our way to Holy Week and the cross so was Jesus in these verses. Jesus was meandering around in the **northern part** of the Holy Land. He was up in **Galilee** and **Perea** but the time was fast approaching for Him **to die** in Jerusalem.

Jesus was TECHNICALLY in territory ruled by Herod. WHATEVER people thought of the **Herods** you always took them seriously. This Herod's dad was Herod the GREAT – the Herod of Christmas who ordered the slaughter of the Bethlehem babies. **This Herod also had blood** on his hands – the blood of John the Baptist. **This Herod DIDN'T LIKE** John accusing him of **committing adultery** and calling him to **repent** of his sin. So he had John arrested and **imprisoned** and **later on** just to SAVE FACE he had John beheaded. You DIDN'T MESS AROUND with the **Herods!**

With Jesus still in Herod's territory **"some Pharisees came and said, 'Leave, and go away from here, because Herod wants to kill You.'"** It's hard to tell if this was a REAL THREAT or just a bluff. We know the Pharisees couldn't stand Jesus and wanted Him dead. **We know** that Herod wondered if Jesus **was perhaps John** the Baptist back from the dead. We also know that Herod **"wanted to see Jesus perform some miracle."**

WHATEVER the case Jesus wasn't intimidated. **"Go tell that fox, 'Look, I am going to drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.'"** Jesus' message to Herod was BASICALLY, "Herod, you don't scare Me. You **better take another look** at Me and understand WHO you're **trying to mess** with." Jesus points Herod to His miracles including "driving out demons and healing people." Herod may have been impressed with ROMAN **power** and **glory** but Jesus' miracles reveal DIVINE **power** and **glory**. Jesus is more than John the Baptist COME BACK TO HAUNT Herod. Jesus is God Himself IN THE FLESH.

Jesus is the Son of God HERE ON a mission and puny Herod was **not going** to INTERFERE with Jesus' mission or schedule. ***"I must go on My way today and tomorrow and the next day, because it cannot be that a prophet would be killed outside Jerusalem!"*** BEHOLD Jesus' boundless love – a love that takes Him to a CERTAIN DEATH in Jerusalem. Jesus heads to Jerusalem KNOWING FULL WELL what all awaits Him there – the **betrayal**, the **trials**, the **cross**. Jesus heads to Jerusalem knowing the PURPOSE of it all – to save guilty sinners from death and hell's eternal punishment. Jesus heads to Jerusalem knowing that ONLY HE – the **God-man** – could pay for the sins of the whole world.

Behold Jesus' BOUNDLESS love! Jesus came here to DO EVERYTHING to save us – including enduring the **death** and **hell** we had coming. **In our place** Jesus had been busy living the **holy** and **perfect** life we owed God. NOW He was heading to the **cross** where He would be punished in our place – where He would sacrifice His life and shed His blood to ***"take away the sin of the world."*** THAT is Jesus' boundless love FOR YOU – for **me** – for **all** people!

That boundless – SAVING – love of Jesus also leads Jesus to...

II. Mourn for those who reject Him.

Jesus MUST DIE in Jerusalem. That was God's plan. JUST AS Jesus was born in Bethlehem and **not in Babylon** – SO Jesus must die in Jerusalem and not **in some other** city. GOD SAID it would happen in this way and so it WILL – it MUST.

That mention of **Jerusalem** leads Jesus to REFLECT on Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the HOLY CITY – the capitol of God's chosen people. Jerusalem was the site of the **temple** – the VISIBLE SYMBOL of God dwelling among His people – the **visible** REMINDER of God's promise to send a Savior from sin, death and the devil. **The temple** was a visible sign of THE LOVE – the BOUNDLESS love! – God had lavished on the Israelites.

Jerusalem was so blessed yet Jesus laments, ***"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her!"*** SUCH LOVE God had shown the Israelites. A love so patient – so forgiving – a love CONTINUALLY reaching out to the Israelites – calling them back to Him. Yet what had HAPPENED? They ***"killed and stoned"*** the very prophets God IN BOUNDLESS LOVE had sent to them. NOW they would even reject and kill the ***"beloved Son"*** of God – the promised Savior of the world – their ONLY HOPE of heaven.

"How often I have wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" SUCH a boundless love! Jesus so willing – REACHING OUT again and again – Jesus EVEN so willing to actually die for our sins. Jesus pictures His love AS THAT of a **mother hen** trying to protect her chicks by gathering them ***"under her wings."*** Jesus SPARED NO EFFORT – no cost. He FREELY OFFERED them what nobody else could **ever give** them – forgiveness – peace with God – eternal life in heaven. ***"But you were not willing!"***

Jesus' boundless love is a UNIVERSAL love – it is for all people – NO MATTER their age – their **race** – their sin – whatever. ***"God our Savior wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."*** Jesus is ***"the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world."*** BECAUSE Jesus' love is universal – FOR EVERYBODY! – we can be absolute sure it's also FOR US – for you – for me.

A boundless – universal – SAVING love – ***"but you were not willing."*** So many reject God's love in Jesus. They want God ON THEIR TERMS – **not His**. They don't want God INTERFERING in their lives and trying to control them **as they see** it. They don't want to repent of their sins or change their **ways** or **priorities**. They foolishly think God would NEVER SEND anyone to hell **or** that they're not THAT BAD that they **should go** to hell. WHATEVER THE REASON they ***"are not willing."*** They DON'T WANT Jesus' boundless, saving love. They end up in hell with NO ONE to blame but

themselves. ***“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I have wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”*** HOW SAD that so many follow Jerusalem’s example.

Jesus’ boundless love mourns those **who reject** him, but...

III. His love gives eternal hope to those who believe in Him.

“Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you will say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’” Those who reject Jesus HAVE NOTHING. They may think they have a GOOD LIFE – that they’re getting along just fine WITHOUT Jesus – but without Jesus they have NO REAL forgiveness – **no real peace** or hope – **no real comfort**.

But not all reject Jesus and His **boundless love** for them. There are those who BY GOD’S GRACE and the working of the Holy Spirit who say, ***“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”*** We hear the crowds shouting that on Palm Sunday – and that song has continued down through the ages. As people hear the GOOD NEWS of Jesus’ **boundless love** the Holy Spirit leads many to believe in Jesus as their Savior. THROUGH the gospel the Holy Spirit opens eyes to SEE – He makes hearts trust – in God’s **boundless love** in Jesus.

WHAT BLESSINGS Jesus **boundless love** brings us. Here is the JOY of being loved and forgiven by God. We CAN’T FOOL God **into thinking** we’re such great people – that He’s so lucky to have us. We can’t hide our **sin** and **rebellion** from God. **We know** God REALLY SHOULD turn His back on us and say, “THE HELL with you!” – and yet – and yet there is Jesus! Jesus washing all our sins away in His precious blood. Jesus clothing us with His perfect life. Jesus inviting us again and again to His priceless Supper. Jesus taking us up in His arms – protecting us from the devil. Jesus working all things for our eternal good – Jesus leading us safely home to heaven. WHAT LOVE – **such** a boundless love Jesus – HAS for you – for me – for all.

ADD to that the joy of one day seeing Jesus return in glory – raising our dead bodies back to life – living with Jesus forever in that ***“new heaven and new earth.”*** HOW we will greet that day with a TRIUMPHANT, ***“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”*** That is the BOUNDLESS LOVE of Jesus!

Reality is that LIFE IS FULL of **so many disappointments** and frustrations – including our lives as Christians. But nothing is MORE REAL than Jesus’ boundless love for you – for me – for all. Amen.

NICENE CREED