

Sermon during Matins in the chapel of St.Timothy at LTS on St.Luke's gospel 9:51-56

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all +

"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. ["You do not know what kind of spirit you are of" Luk 9:55 NAS] Then he and his disciples went to another village." (Luk 9:51-56 NIV)

Dear friends of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ:

"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem." The tide was turning, the seasons were changing and God's time was approaching – it was nearly ripe. It was about time. The time had just about come, but not quite as yet. It was not to happen outside of Jerusalem, but inside the city of David's. That ancient place of God's presence amongst his people. There were the sacrificial lambs were offered and not only on the high feast of Peschach, but every single day – as a token and sign of the propitiation of the manifold and diverse sins of all people and of the whole world to come. That was about to happen. The capital was getting all set and ready for the great and high Easter of the Jews – that wonderful holiday commemorating God's deliverance and salvation and liberation of Israel from Egypt and many, many were drawing closer from far and wide and they getting there slowly and surely all those "Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia (i.e. Iraq, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan), Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene i.e N.Africa; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs" (cf Act 2:9-11 NIV) They all wanted to be part of the celebrations, ready to party and join in the merriment, feasting, jubilation and do what proper Jews and converts to Judaism do – celebrate the Passah, the Jewish Easter. It was nearly time and was time to get moving. The holiday was nearly upon them. And so was the time for Jesus approaching too. As true man he was subject to the constant, patient and irrepressible march of time. Subject to the ways of the world, the laws of time and space, so: "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem." He would not be late, but on time. He would not be caught outside of Jerusalem, but in the centre of the action, the centerpiece of the enfolding cosmic drama. He was the focal point, the very hinge of old and new. However he was not to party and to dance, but to suffer much and to die horribly – yes, be crucified, die an outcast and be condemned unjustly, despised and deserted by all: He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide

their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.” (Isa 53:3-4 NIV)

Now know this, Jesus does not flee like Jonah trying to outrun his calling to missionize Ninive or Elijah trying to escape that fiendish queen and nemesis Isebel or Jacob trying to flee from his outraged brother Esau or Adam/Eve from God in the garden. No – despite severe temptations to do just this “run away, hide and hope the storm blows over”, temptations even by his staunchest and most outspoken disciple St.Peter: “No, all else but not this. Don’t go. Don’t do it. Don’t suffer & die. Just let it be. We’ll find a way out of this” Jesus resolutely turned towards Jerusalem and set out towards that city on the hills, that holy city that persecuted prophets and godly men, that got along just fine without God and his preachers – for his time had now come. He knew it. He did not flee or hide, but turned purposefully and determined, staunchly, single-minded and unwavering towards this his goal and godly destination. He was not going to be put off, but was going to go there on time and to do, what he was predestined to be: The Lamb of God that carries the sins of the world.

Kyrie eleison + Christe eleison + Kyrie eleison +

On this way to Jerusalem – to suffer in Getsemane, be tortured, flogged, publicly displayed and mocked at Gabatha and die naked, rejected and alone on Golgotha – Jesus doesn’t just jump the gun, but goes one step at a time, hour for hour, day by day. So walking the way up to Jerusalem he needs to stay overnight. A Samaritan village seems like a good place to rest on the way. There’s hope. Jesus did talk about a good Samaritan. There might be some of those in the village. People who would grant Bed & breakfast on the way, asylum for the night, shelter from the elements. I’m sure Jesus would have proven himself grateful. They would have received what was fitting and appropriate, the payment of a prophet and more even – God’s richest blessings. After all it was the Son of David, the King of kings, the Messiah passing by – much more than old blow-waved Trump and even more than that bouncy Beyoncé. But they would not have him. He was not welcome. He was to just continue on his way to Jerusalem and walk right by them. They thought they were better off without him – just another Jew on the way to Jerusalem. They didn’t heed the global truth of the apostles words: “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” (Heb 13:2 NIV) So the sons of thunder (Boanerges): John and James fume at this indignity, they rage at this inhospitality, they are ready to set them straight, who’ve got it obviously wrong and who are not welcoming the Lord and master IX. They on the way to the glorification and manifestation of the Christ, were willing to clear the road, make the hills low and lift the valleys, nuke some Samaritans and torch some Muslims and tar and feather some niggers for some good measure. Oh yes, they were standing up for Jesus. Fighting the good war and clearing his way in the process – getting rid of cockroaches, rats and other vermin like

unbelieving Jews, Turks and Hottentots. Now Jesus has to turn again – just like against St. Peter the other day – now it is John & James' turn. He turns and he rebukes them most strictly: "Don't you know whose Spirits kin you are?" Oh Jesus had so much trouble and misunderstanding and opposition even from his very own disciples – the inner circle. If they were so hard of hearing and even slower at understanding Jesus calls them back so patiently and remindingly and gainingly, how much more should we be patient, with those who just don't know better: "Father forgive them, for they know not, what they are doing!" (7x70 times for the brother, who sins against us)

You are children of the heavenly Father, who lets rain fall on good and evil. He's the one, who has promised to not wipe out humanity again although they still so much deserve it. He doesn't want those Samaritans to die, to perish and be lost – but that they are converted, come to the knowledge of truth and be saved – eternally! Therefore patience, love, mercy and loads of teaching, support, encouragement – and don't be overcome by evil, but overcome the evil with good. That was Jesus' mission. That's what he was going to do. That was the very, very ancient magic with which he would overcome the old evil foe Satan and free humanity from its sinful chains, harrow hell and empty the jails, concentration camps, prisons, torture chambers and death cells of the devil. I've not come to destroy you, but to give you life and salvation. I'm out to get the devil though. Destroy his works and evil, life destructiveness, but for you my dear people, I bring back life. That's my life saving mission. That's what I've come to do in Jerusalem. That's where I'm going and I'm not going to be put off. Rather I will do this resolutely and most determined until it is done, fulfilled and finished. "Then he and his disciples went to another village." Amen. The peace of the Lord be with you always + Amen.

Hymn 718: *Jesus lead thou on till the rest is won...*