

5 S. after Pentecost  
Lamentations 3:22-33; Mark 5:21-43

6/27/21  
8B

THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD NEVER CEASES;  
HIS MERCIES NEVER COME TO AN END;  
THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING;  
GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS.

Have you ever starting watching a movie or reading a book and within a few minutes or a few pages, you're pretty sure, you have that gut feeling, how this is going to end? Take your John Wayne western, for example. Everyone's favorite, right! You know the Duke is going to be put in some type of conflict that needs to be resolved, it appears that the Duke is going to be overcome and the bad guys triumph, but in the end the Duke prevails and defeats the Ned Peppers of this world, good triumphing over evil. Or take you're C.J. Box book. Dittos, right? Same thing. Game Warden Joe Pickett triumphs over evil in the end.

As you heard the Scripture readings this morning, did you find yourself thinking, "I know how this is going to turn out?" Did the conclusion seem evident from the way it started?

What about Jairus in our Gospel reading? He was living every parent's worst nightmare. His beloved little girl was sick, sick to the point of death. Medicine hadn't helped. He was helpless. So, in faith, he beseeches Jesus, "Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live (v. 23)." And Jesus, Jesus goes with him to his house to his daughter.

But, as they go, you know what happens. They meet a woman who had a flow of blood for 12-years. She had spent all her money on medical care, but the doctors couldn't do anything for her; in fact, she grew worse over time. Twelve years. Twelve years she had lived with this. Twelve

years of anxious nights and days of worry. She was helpless. She's waiting, waiting, waiting twelve years, and by her outward circumstances, nothing seems to help.

Oh, and we can't forget who else is waiting -- waiting this whole time. There's Jairus, cooling his heels. Jesus went with the ruler of the synagogue to his house to lay His holy hand on his little girl and make her well. But Jesus decides to take His sweet time getting there. He stops and has this conversation with this woman. And there's Jairus, "Let's go, Jesus, we gotta get to my house. My little girl is waiting, Jesus." And because Jesus took His sweet time getting to the sick little girl, the worst of worst news came, "Your daughter is dead" (v. 35).

Which brings us to our Old Testament lesson this Sunday. The words of the book of Lamentation were written by the prophet Jeremiah. He was an eyewitness to the divine judgment on Jerusalem; which means he had something to weep about. Jeremiah paints a grim picture of the destruction of the temple, the ransacking of the city, and the exile of her inhabitants. Read through the beginning of Lamentations 3, the verses before our lesson begin, and see if you can predict how the story ends. There, you read words like these,

"Surely against me [God] turns His hand...He has made my flesh and my skin waste away; He has broken my bones...He has made my chains heavy...though I call and cry for help, He shuts out my prayer...He tore me to pieces...I became the laughingstock of all peoples, the object of their taunts all day long...My soul is bereft of peace" (cf. La 3:1-7).

The people of Judah and Jerusalem had sinned, and sinned, and sinned some more. When God sent prophets to call them to repentance, they ignored them and turned a deaf ear to them. And now, they were

being disciplined by God. The pagan Babylonians had come, laid waste to the city, and taken the people into captivity, leaving only a few behind. Things were bad for God's chosen people, and Jeremiah saw it all. By outward appearances, it appeared the Lord had abandoned His chosen children. And, how would it end?

So, what do you do when you wait for the Lord? When you're wondering how it all will end? When your child or spouse or parent is ill, and you feel your helplessness to do anything about it. Or, maybe you're the one who is sick. One doctor appointment after another. You've had anxious nights and days of worry. Or, maybe you live every day in a marriage that is not the blessing God wants it to be, but a cumbersome curse. Or, that child that won't even talk to you these days. And there you are cooling your heels. "Thought you were coming to my house, Jesus." And, you're waiting...waiting...waiting.

When you walk by what you see with your earthly eyes, your emotions, feelings, outward circumstances will tell you God has abandoned you. And, don't overlook Satan whispering his lies in your ear, driving you to shame and despair. Why, it won't take long, and you will even be convinced that God is punishing you. Jeremiah writes this, "[God] does not afflict from His heart or grieve the children of men" (v. 33). In other words, God is not some mean, cruel tyrant in heaven who takes delight in making you cry. But, God will allow sorrow, toil, and woe into your life to work for your God – your repentance and faith. That's what He did in the life of Jairus, the woman with discharge of blood, Israel being taken into captivity into Babylon. In the dire circumstances God permitted to come into their lives, they saw their helplessness and lamented to God, for God alone is the only one who can help you.

And look at what they -- and you -- can say in faith,

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in Him (vv. 22-24)."

There is one reason you can say that – Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who brings you the steadfast love of God. Jesus is the one who shows you mercy. Jesus is the one who is with you every morning of your life. And, Jesus is faithful to you. Like the writer of the Hebrews says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (He 4:15).

As you face temptation to think God has abandoned you or doesn't care about you, or even that He is punishing you, THERE IS JESUS. He knows all about lamenting, because He took the punishment for your sins. You ever feel you are just wasting away? His skin and flesh did waste away when He was flogged for your sin. Ever feel like you just bound up with a heavy chain and cannot free yourself? Jesus knows all about that, because He fixed to the cross with nails. Upon that cross, He was the laughingstock of the people and the object of their taunts, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross" (Mk 15:29)!

Jesus knows what it's like to have God's wrath poured out against Him. That wrath was poured out on Jesus for your sin, so that it would not be poured out on you. He was abandoned by God for your sins, so that you would never be abandoned by God. He knows what its like to lament to God, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani", My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me" (Mt 27:46)? And, God did not answer Him. He left Jesus to

die. Why? Jesus is God's steadfast love. Jesus is God's mercy. Jesus is God's faithfulness. Jesus died on the cross and rose the 3<sup>rd</sup> day to bring God's steadfast love, His mercy, His faithfulness into your life.

And, He does that as you hear God's Word and in your Baptism and in eating and drinking His Body and Blood.

Jesus is for you. He died and rose for you. And, that means you know the story ends, because Jesus' victory is your victory. Jesus is the answer to your lament. And that means you can say, "Great is your faithfulness ... so, I'll wait".