

Pentecost 19 10/4/2026
Matthew 21:33-46 22A
LWML Sunday

THE STONE THAT THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CORNERSTONE; THIS WAS THE LORD'S DOING, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES.

As though we need more reminders that we live in the valley of the shadow of death, a man was murdered in Dublin, CA, this past week. But, what causes this taking of life to stand out is not merely the fact that he was shoot to death by his 77-year-old father-in-law and mother-in-law, but the *disturbing, bizarre* thing – I'm not even really sure what word to use there -- was that they wore masks and took turns passing the same gun back and forth between them, and taking turns shooting him with it.

In this senseless shooting, we saw a glimpse – I should say “another” glimpse – of a world that has rejected its Creator and Redeemer. But, God does not want His creation cursed by sin. And so, HE SENT CHRIST TO BE THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR FAITH AND OUR LIVES.

The Sunday before Jesus spoke the words of our Gospel, He had ridden into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. As Jesus was teaching in the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him and said, “*By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?*” (Mt 21:23). He tells them the parable of the Two Sons, as we heard last week, and then, immediately, tells them the parable of the Tenants before us in our Gospel this morning. And, the Evangelist tells us “*When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived he was speaking about them*” (v. 45).

That's right, Jesus was speaking about them, because they had rejected Jesus, the Savior God sent. Much like the world in which we live.

I. We see the fruits of that rejection all around us.

When tragedies like murders happen, the mantra that you often hear in the media is "Why?" We have to find out why this happened? If we want to know "why," all we have to do is listen to the words of Jesus, *"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person"* (Mt 15:19-20).

Why did Cain kill his brother Abel? For the same reason that those 77-year-old shooters murdered their son-in-law. It all begins **HERE** – in the heart. Out of the heart, comes hatred, and anger, and emotions that we cannot even describe with words, but are known to God. And, they are not God-pleasing.

We selfishly murder unborn babies so that we can have our fun without consequences and live the life and the lifestyle we want. I still like to point out that when abortion was legal in the state of North Dakota, there was a kindergarten class aborted every week in Fargo, ND. That's right, the number of babies murdered in Fargo, North Dakota, every week was equal to the size of an average kindergarten class in North Dakota. And then in the next breath, we ask: *Where are all the young people?*

We have made a mockery of marriage, pretending that two men or two women can be united in holy matrimony.

And, greed and coveting lead people to steal our identity and try to gain access to our financial accounts to rob us blind.

That's the fruits of a world without Jesus. But, Dear Christian, before you decry the world, allow me to ask you a question: what are the fruits of

your life showing? What about the times you refuse to take up your cross, and follow Jesus?

You hate your neighbor. Sure, ya do. You keep a record of wrongs. You refuse to forgive and be reconciled in Christ. And what does the Bible say, the Bible you read? *Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him (1 Jn 3:15).* Your hating your neighbor is as much a sin against the 5th Commandment, as the shooters who shot their son-in-law.

What about the off-color joke is told? And, you laugh hysterically. You think it's funny. But, God, who instituted marriage and gave us the 6th Commandment, calls it ... sin, just like the two homosexuals thinking they can enter into marriage.

Oh, and your greed. It shows itself in your grumbling and complaining. Your neighbor gets new and bigger and nicer ... whatever...., and you don't have it, so you get angry and are filled with self-pity. You accumulate more and more earthly stuff, because you really don't believe God will open His hand and satisfy your every need of body and soul. And, the Lord your God says, "You shall not covet".

II. The GOOD NEWS of the Gospel is that God sent His Son into this world to be sin for you.

Into this world, Jesus came to this earth for you as a little baby, born of the Virgin Mary. And here is the wonderful Good News of the Christian faith: He did not come with the rod of judgment to smite poor sinners down; no, He came in grace and love and mercy and kindness to take from you all your evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immortality, theft, false witness, slander ... all your sorrows, all your griefs, all your worries and all your

fears, He took from you all your sins and carried it all to the cross of Calvary. There, He suffered the loss of His life for you, as the payment and sacrifice for all your sins, so that you are forgiven.

And, then He rose the 3rd day to win for us the victory of sin, and death, and hell itself. Jesus Himself says it this way, *“The stone that the builders rejected has become our cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes”* (v. 42).

III. God has prepared our hearts to produce the fruit of faith.

After David sinned with Bathsheba, he cried, *“Create in me a clean heart, O God”* (Ps 51:10). We sing those words in our liturgy because the Christian life is the life of repentance. In the new birth of your baptism, God replaces your heart of sin with a new heart, the heart of Christ Himself. A heart that delights in doing God’s will. That means for us, My Friends, that living, and moving, and having our being in Christ, our Cornerstone, we produce good works of thought, word, and deed, that glorify our Father in heaven and serve your neighbor.

Today, Jesus sends us to our neighbors with that same with grace and love and mercy and kindness He has for us.

The Lord desires that His Word goes out to make disciples of all nations. Yet as you know, you cannot be everywhere. Your talents will not meet all needs. That is why the Lord God has blessed His church with numerous people, willing and gracious people, people who desire to serve and spread the Gospel message through numerous mission efforts. Today, we remember and celebrate the work of the LWML, because the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League is our partner in this work. These Lutheran Women in Mission support missions in 85 different countries.

Through numerous mission projects, they have provided aid working with people in disaster response, braille work, water trucks, mental health issues, missionaries who have taught the saving message of Christ to others; and the list goes on and on. This is the mission work that they LWML joyously supports on **your** behalf. For, you see My Friends, their desire is your desire, that Christ Jesus be proclaimed in all that is undertaken, that lives are touched and hearts opened by the Gospel of peace.

Like you, the reason the LWML supports missions throughout the world and in this congregation is that they, have come know the grace, love, mercy, and kindness of Jesus. With you, the ladies of the LWML are excited to carry forth the message of Christ to all the nations. No, you cannot be everywhere, you cannot do everything. But, we can support the efforts of others from a heart touched by the mercy of God. Pray for and support the LWML who do so much in support of missions on your behalf. Pray for and support the efforts that take place here at Concordia. Share the message of Christ in all you do, for you have received Christ, our Cornerstone, who came in grace and mercy and kindness to serve you.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.