Luke 21:5-19 Nov. 13, 2016

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Leaping for joy like calves (Micah 4:2);

that is how some felt on Wednesday morning

Weeping, sobbing, inconsolable grief;

that is how others woke up that same day.

It does not seem to really be over does it?

Six days later, we are trying to pick up the pieces

of this most divisive presidential election.

A candidate has become the victor,

but our divisions cut deep.

And it is hard to imagine that they will be mended any time soon.

*(paraphrase from Laura Thelander, Luther Seminary Chapel)*

Enter Jesus words in Luke predicting

divisions, disasters,

international & civil unrest, persecutions.

Jesus words do not seem a future prediction.

It is now.

We need go no further than the election booth for Jesus description

of family members divided against each other, & betrayal to ring true.

We need not scroll very far down our FB pages or twitter accounts

to see that the ideals of democracy, dignity, and decency are being shaken.

We need not travel beyond our nation's borders to believe that

turmoil and conflict are the order of the day.

We need not look further than the reasons in our hearts and minds that

we chose the candidate we did on Tuesday

to admit that people on both sides are

afraid, worried, and despairing

for their very safety and future

amid our quickly changing culture & world.

Over the past few days,

I have tried very hard to understand why people voted for Trump or Clinton.

There are voices of wisdom out there that say these conversations

need to be had with people on the other side,

so that we can understand each other and move ahead.

I have read blogs, social media, news reports, and spoken to many of you.

And this is what I have found out:

The "end is coming" is believed by both the winners and losers of this election.

* Some out there are thrilled and overjoyed that 8 years of a democratic president has ended, and their vision for the economy, trade, job creation, Supreme Court, and foreign policy has begun.
* Others out there are saddened and frightened that the results have emboldened a climate of intolerance and that the safety and legal rights of historically oppressed groups will erode for women, people of color, gays & lesbians, immigrants, non-Christians, even the environment.
* Some of you are just weary & exhausted and don't want to think about it anymore.

For the readers of Luke, the days that Jesus said were coming....

"the end" had already arrived.

The temple had been destroyed.

The stones had all fallen down --

actually, they had been burned up.

The spot where the temple had been was so leveled that

they were probably as shocked and disbelieving

that an amazing edifice of wealth and grandeur and beauty

had **really** ever stood there

as those were when Jesus said it was coming down.

For them the issue wasn't,

"When is this going to happen," but,

Now that it has all fallen down,

"Now that it has happened,

what do we do? What does it mean?"

Jesus' word to us now are the same as they were then.

Do not be afraid.

It is time for the people of God

for followers of Jesus to say something.

To speak out. To testify.

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton reminded us this week that

"We believe that all people are created in the image of God

whether they voted for your candidate or not"

No matter how you voted,

When we see protestors encouraging their children to bat around a Trump piñata

or burn his effigy we must step in and say, no way is that ok.

No matter how you voted,

when we hear people calling others ignorant or stupid or questioning their intelligence for how they voted,we must step in and say, no way is that ok.

No matter how you voted,

when Graffiti in Maple Grove, MN High School Bathroom reads "whites only. Go back to Africa. Make America great again." We must step in and say no way is that ok.

No matter how you voted,

When a women are taunted about Trump

while have their head scarves/hijabs torn from their heads

and fake deportation letters are handed out

to fellow students in Redding California,

we must say no way, that's not ok.

We must not be afraid to speak out, to testify,

to believe that Jesus has words for us to say,

and that he expects us to say them and act on them.

In these days of division, Montana Synod Bishop Jessica Crist reminded us that

"In the Church, we have an opportunity and an obligation to begin the healing process in our communities, to be a beacon of light for those who are exhausted, embittered, afraid or unheard-[whether they voted for Trump or Clinton.] Regardless of our political convictions, regardless of our strongly held opinions, what holds us together is stronger than what separates us. And as Christians we need to model that for the rest of the country.

We are joined together by our baptism. We are held together by the love of God in Christ Jesus, who gave his life for the sake of the world, the whole world. We are held together by the God who created each one of us in the divine image, and who loves each one of us despite our faults and flaws. We are held together by the Holy Spirit, who works to transcend our pettiness and self-interest. We are held together by being a forgiven, loved and redeemed people-all of us."

As I ponder what it means to united in Christ in our days of division,

I have been inspired by the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.

who lived through a divided time in our nation

that we did not think we could come through

He said: "I must be true to my conviction that I share with all men [and women]

**the calling to be a son of the living God.**

**Beyond the calling of race or nation or creed**

**is this vocation of sonship and brotherhood. [sisterhood)**

**He said, "Because I believe that the Father is deeply concerned,**

**especially for His suffering and helpless and outcast children,**

**I come tonight to speak for them.**

**This I believe to be the privilege and the burden**

**of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties**

**which are broader and deeper than nationalism**

**and which go beyond our nation’s self-defined goals and positions.**

**We are called to speak**

**for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation,**

**for those it calls “enemy,”**

**for no document from human hands can make these humans**

**any less our brothers [and sisters]"**

No ballot box. No president. No party can make

the person sitting next to you

the person who voted differently that you

the person whose skin color or gender or physical abilities are different than you

the person whose religion or country of origin is different than you

any less your sister, your brother, your gift, your precious treasure from God

and your responsibility to love, serve, help, **defend**, and bless

all for the sake of Jesus good name. Amen.