

Salisbury Mob Would Lynch Hoover or Ritchie, Says Pastor

Nobody Safe when Civilization Gets as Low as it is on the Eastern Shore, the Rev. S. L. James Tells Leadenhall Street Congregation, Sunday.

The Rev. S. H. James, minister to Leadenhall Baptist Church, South Baltimore, preached Sunday from the subject, "The Church's Place in the Present World Crisis." Concerning the Salisbury tragedy, he said:

"The awful crime committed by the ring leaders of this insane, blood-thirsty mob, is another black spot on the white pages of America's history that should make the Christian Church, which is supposed to guide the emotions of the people, hide its face in the mantle of eternal shame.

"There are those who say that the President of this nation can stop the mob, but this is not true. The same spirit that drove the mob to commit the crime in Salisbury will drive a mob to tie a rope around President Hoover's neck.

"Some say that Governor Ritchie had the power to stop the mob, but, no, my friends, that self-same heathen force that fired the ring-leader of this mob will fire men and women to hang Governor Ritchie to a limb on a tree.

"Still others say that the Salisbury sheriff and other city and county officials could have prevented this mob, but that is not true, because the same wild emotions that moved this mob will urge a mob to tar and feather every official in Wicomico County.

"This is true because nowhere else, except, perhaps, in solitary confinement, are the voluntary movements of men so limited as they are in the crowd; and the larger the crowd the greater is this limitation, the lower sinks the individual self.

"Intensity of personality is in inverse proportion to the number of aggregated men.

"This law makes it possible for a mob at any time and anywhere, and a mob is no respecter of persons. The mob has but one objective, and that is to devour its prey, and the mob will mob all who try to protect its prey.

"State and national officials naturally play in this picture, but if they were and are willing, they could play but a small role. The force that can stop the mob, and the ones responsible to stop the mob, lay in another direction. This problem lays at the door of the Christian church. The church can stop it and the church only is basically responsible for the existence of the mob spirit.

"The church is supposed to evaluate personality, to the extent that each man will see the other man as his brother, and therefore deal with one another as brothers. The church is supposed to make real to humanity, that the red man, the yellow man, the white man and the black, constitute one big family with God as father.

"This will be done when the preacher, who is the visible head of the church, stops looking at his

strategic position in society as a bread and butter job, and becomes a preacher of righteousness indeed, by living and preaching daily the practical religion of Jesus Christ.

"The church is responsible for this crime, and the Christian preacher most especially. And I am not talking about the black or white preacher, or the black or white church, because the church of the living God is not thus separated. If there is any church at all, we are one in Christ Jesus.

"When we are willing to live and preach the religion of Jesus, then and not until then will such crimes as the one committed on the Eastern Shore be impossible. It is then that there will be a renovating, a reshaping, and resetting of this world of broken-down society, in which men, good, upright, honest men, are reduced to economic slavery.

"It is the preacher as leader of his local congregation, who can correct these wrongs. Jesus gave him the plan and program and to no one else but him. That plan and program is the religion of Jesus, the principles of which are sufficient for all the unhappiness, the inequalities, the woes and the injustices of our present social order.

"The question is being asked: Do we have such preachers? Will they awake to the sense of their power in Christ Jesus, and reset ideals to the extent that we will have a world fit to live in? As the preacher is confronted with mob violence in the country, not only that but a world crisis, if he does not give the world deliverance, deliverance will come from another source.

"If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? These words were spoken by Mordecai to Esther, in the long ago, but they stand today both as a warning and a challenge to the modern preacher and church.

"What will we do about it? Will we preach or will we hold our peace because we are afraid of offending some of our local congregation by telling him what thus saith the Lord?

"We may fail, but deliverance is coming. Far better it is that the church should open men's eyes to misery, injustice and social unfairness than that such information should come from reckless agitators, incipient Bolsheviks, political demagogues, yellow sheets and sensational newspapers.

"The challenge is up to the church. What will we do about it?

"I do wish that every minister who reads this release would write me his personal reaction. Address 638 W. Barre Street, Baltimore, Md."