

2nd Sunday in Advent – Vicar Anderson sermon
St. Luke 21:25-36 “The Second Coming Worth Waiting For.”
December 3/4, 2022 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

In Nomine Iesu

+ + +

Heavenly Father, we thank you that because of your great mercy you sent your Son to be our Savior. As the world tries to focus on the evil, and it continues to look like a scary place, help us to use this time of the church year to look with confidence at what Jesus says. That we don't need to worry. That he is coming soon. We pray that you give us the strength and the courage as we continue on in this life until our Savior returns in glory. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Rom. 1:7, etc.)

The sermon text for today is taken from the 21st chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. We read selected verses in Jesus' name:

“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

These are Your words, heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. (Joh. 17:17)

In Christ Jesus, who says this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away, dear fellow redeemed:

We are at that point in time where my wife says, this is the most wonderful time of the year! Just me saying that and you can already hear the music in your head. We do always look forward to the holiday seasons. We are planning what we are going to make for food, what we are going to buy for gifts. It is great to look ahead for the holidays. Since we gauge things in time, there are other things on the calendar we look ahead towards. We look ahead to birthdays, anniversaries, vacation and the list goes on. With ourselves trained to look ahead for certain dates that are ahead, Scripture reminds us that there is a more important date that is coming up. It is a date that we are supposed to look forward to, we are supposed to expect it, yet we tend to

forget about it. As we get excited to remember and celebrate Christ's first coming, we should not forget about what Christ says about his second coming.

Jesus speaks very clearly about what is going to happen. Jesus says, *"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken."* If that sounds very serious, then look around, these signs are happening. What Jesus says is happening. His kingdom is coming. The earth is only our temporary home. It will pass away. Now we could look at what is happening in the world and we could freak out. It seems like a lot of people are doing that already. Or we can listen to what Jesus says when it comes to the end of the world and prepare for His coming.

As the end draws near, God calls us to repent. Paul writes, *that [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* (1 Tim. 2:4) This happens with a contrite heart. We repent of our sins. Our sins are very serious and they have eternal consequences. The world doesn't like that at all. Who likes to be told that they have done something wrong? For the world this is very despairing, so they try to stop and ignore the signs. They will try to save the dying world's health. They will look for a worldly peace among the nations by treaties. They will try to control the climate. They will also see these signs and instead of prepare, they will be like in the days of Noah and act like nothing is happening. That Jesus second coming should just be ignored. Why should the world care about the signs that Jesus tells us when they can find something as great as their own self-worth. Now we see the outcome of the world rejecting the teachings of Christ. Jesus is telling us the truth, repent for the kingdom of God is coming, the world will end.

Unfortunately, Satan is crafty and he has a way of getting us to fall into the traps and worries of the world. Jesus tries to warn us. He says, *"But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth."* Due to our own stubbornness, we also fall into the traps ourselves. We see the problems of this life and we see how they affect us and we begin to worry. What will happen when the famine, pestilence, and wars hit close to home? So, we put our confidence in the powerful people of the world. Or we try to find help and comfort in worldly things that cannot save us. The temptations of the world will not go away quietly, the world shows us how noisy it is. It wants us to tune out the signs and the promises that Jesus has given us. It wants to distract us from what really matters and get us to focus on what is passing away.

It is so interesting that we look forward to so many dates and special occasions yet we lose focus on what Christ tells us. Talking about the end is coming directly from our Savior yet it is the hardest even for us to hear at times. We don't like to hear when we are wrong. We don't want to be corrected of our sins. If we stay in our sins, then we will be condemned with the rest of the world. Our hearts can harden, and if we die in unbelief or if we are without faith when Jesus returns, then we will join the devil and his demons in hell. The world is not prepared for Christ's return, but we need to be. When we forget about repentance, then we have succumbed to the world and we end up not being vigilant. When we are weighed down by our own cares and anxieties, then we forget about the comfort in Jesus second coming.

As we get ready to celebrate and rejoice in the first coming of Christ, we also look forward to what is to come because Christ will come again in glory to take us to our heavenly home for all eternity! This terrible evil world will come to an end and we won't have to stay in it. Because of Christ life and death on the cross, we don't have to suffer the pains of hell. He will call us to our eternal home.

Advent is the season for looking ahead. We see how Christ came humbly into the world, yet we *"will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."* We needed him to come the first time because we needed a Savior from our sins. Jesus redeemed us from our sins of worrying. He takes away our sins that have distracted us from His coming. He gives us comfort that his Word will never pass away. This is the message of the Gospel, what Christ has done for us. When we fail and get worried about our future, Jesus gives us comfort that He has not left us and that He is coming soon.

Christians also look ahead to when Christ comes to us in the Means of Grace. This is Christ giving you the assurance that He is trustworthy. He is truth. Every week we hear the Word preached, the blessing of the Gospel of Christ in his Word. There is so much comfort in the Word of God. It tells you how Jesus redeemed you. You are a sinner who could not save yourself, and the Son of God took on flesh to sacrifice Himself for you. He died in your place, so that your sin and death would be overcome forever. He gives you these blessings of His redemption in the mysteries of Holy Communion. You look forward to this sacrament because here is the true body and blood of our Savior given to you for the forgiveness of your sins. This is the assurance that you have forgiveness of sins, life and salvation because of what Christ has done for you.

Verse 27 again says, *"And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."* This is a glory that you will not have to fear. You can rest assured that when Christ comes on the last day you will rejoice in his return. There will be no pain or suffering. All of the trials and temptations of this world will be gone. Your tears will be gone. Your bodies will be glorified where Christ is the light of the world. This is the comfort that you have in His message. Jesus is telling you that believers will not have to worry. This is your eternal reward. Jesus' kingdom will have no end.

Looking forward to Christ's second coming, Jesus tells you how to prepare. *"But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."* Here Jesus gives you the tools to be ready. You pray to him for the strength you need because you can't stand on our own. Your strength to endure through this life comes from Christ, in what He did in his first coming. Living a perfect life, dying, rising from the dead, redeeming you.

Now our calendars can tend to be full at times and I know that everyone has been starting to fill in next year's already. Christ keeps the real focus on him. That is where our focus needs to be. He wants us prepared for His second coming because we don't know when it will come. When we get lost in time, we forget the date entirely. Christ keeps us sure of what is to come. Though life will get difficult, Christ is our comfort because of what he has done. Because of Jesus first coming, we can rejoice when the second coming is here. The world will try to distract us from Christ. It will try to convince us that His Words have no meaning. Jesus however says in verse

32, Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Amen.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

+ + +