

The Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Matthew 24:15-28  
November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Augusta, GA  
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

### The “Abomination of Desolation”

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who by Thy Son hast promised us forgiveness of sins and deliverance from everlasting death, strengthen us, we beseech Thee, by Thy Holy Spirit, that our trust in Thy grace in Christ Jesus may daily increase, and that with sure confidence we may hold fast the blessed hope that we shall not die, but only sleep, and at the Last Day be raised up unto everlasting life; through the same Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we enter into the last few weeks of the Church’s year, our focus is directed to our eternal home in Heaven. This happens every year. Every year we are taken to the joys of Heaven that are promised to us on account of what our Lord + Jesus has done for us by fulfilling the Law and paying the penalty of our sins on the tree of the holy cross. This focus really began on the Festival of All Saints’ Day this past Monday, and I encourage you all to either listen, or re-listen, to my sermon from that day. The Epistle reading from St. Paul’s epistle to the Church of Thessalonica is seeped deep with our eternal rewards.

Those who have fallen into the sleep of death, will be raised again on the Last Day. It is this comforting promise that these words are often chosen as one of the readings for funerals. We need to hear the promise of eternal life spoken into our ears to bring us comfort when our loved ones die. To not hear that comforting promise would leave us like so much of the rest of the world “who have no hope” as St. Paul writes in his Epistle to the Church at Thessalonica. The epistle reading clearly directs our focus to the eternal rewards in Heaven which have been promised us through faith in our Lord’s works and merits. This is not so evident regarding the Gospel reading.

The Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew records the very words of our Lord + Jesus to His Apostles regarding the end times. During this time—the time between our Lord’s Ascension and His triumphant return on the Last Day—the Church, that is, us, will suffer great tribulation; such tribulation that had not been known in the world until our Lord’s death, resurrection and ascension. This is because of at least two reasons: first, the Gospel has been preached in all corners of the world, and the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, does not want to see the promise of salvation in the Christ alone proclaimed to the world, so our enemies fight diligently to suppress the preaching of the Gospel wherever they can. The second reason is that the devil and his demons know that their time

is short before they are cast into the eternal hellfires, along with all those who died as unbelievers. The unbelieving world will be the only group of people excluded from Heaven. As St. John wrote in his revelation from the Lord + Jesus, and was the Epistle reading for All Saints' Day, Heaven will be filled with every tribe and nation, people and tongue. In other words, Heaven will be filled with all the believers in the Christ; those who cling in faith to the works and merits of the Christ.

But our enemies—the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, as well as all the spiritual powers of darkness in this world—do not want to see us receive our eternal reward. Therefore, they subject the Church to great tribulation, as has not been seen since before our Lord's time on the Earth. Our Lord + Jesus tells His Apostles—and us—to flee to the mountains when we see the “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, which is what we will be reading through beginning this Saturday in our daily readings, as we read through the Prophets Ezekiel and Daniel, and all twelve of the minor prophets to wrap up the Church's year.

The “abomination of desolation” is when someone evil stands in the Church to destroy the Church. I do not know how it is with you all, but I have been hearing a lot about the antichrist, especially from my dispensationalist friends; the ones who believe that there will be a literal one-thousand-year time after the Lord's return, when those who were not taken to Heaven—raptured—will have a chance to repent of their unbelief. As we teach in the Augsburg Confession and its Apology, this is a false teaching. When the Lord returns on the Last Day, it will be the LAST Day. These dispensationalist friend of mine are all a bother with pointing out who are antichrists in this day and age that we live in. Certainly, there are many evil people who could be considered an antichrist, but holy Scripture is clear on one point: the antichrist is someone in the Church itself.

The Antichrist is someone who works within the Church herself to destroy the Church. This is the “abomination of desolation” when the Church itself works to suppress the truth of God's Word, and teaches false doctrine to lead, if possible, even the elect away from the comforting promises of the Gospel of our Lord + Jesus Christ. We see this happening in our day and age in many churches, where the false teachings of the world are praised and supported in many church bodies of this world and our society. Homosexuality and abortion are praised as good things, instead of being pointed out for the sins that they are. The destruction of the family through divorce and adultery are ignored and they are so ingrained in our society that many fall silent to speak out against such sins. Sins are lauded and the truth is suppressed. This is the world that we live in. The saddest part is it is those who claim to be Christians who support and praise these sins.

The Church today faces great tribulation. This is what our Lord + Jesus proclaimed would happen. He told His Apostles to flee to the mountains. Where are we to go? We are to flee to the mountain of the Truth of God's Word. We are to flee to this place, and receive into our ears every chance we can get the promises of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. We are to come to this house of worship to hear that our Lord + Jesus has conquered sin and death once and for all. He has won for us an eternal home in Heaven. He will come again on the Last Day to take us to that eternal home. There will be no thousand-year time—the thousand years is this time now between our Lord's Ascension and His return—but our Lord + Jesus promises us that His return will be like the lightening that comes from the east and flashes to the west. Our Lord's return on the Last Day will be as quick as lightening. He will come to judge the quick and the dead, and send all unbelievers to their eternal punishment in Hell—all those who led and were deceived by the false christ of this world—and He will give at long last the eternal reward to all those who cling to Him in faith.

Therefore, my dear friends, do not listen to the false christs with their false teachings so prevalent in this world. Cling instead to the truth of the Word of God, for our Lord + Jesus desires our salvation. He sought our redemption fervently by coming down from Heaven and fulfilling the Law of God and suffering our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. Today, our Lord + Jesus warns us about the

“abomination of desolation” the one standing in the Church to destroy the Church from within. He warns us because He is no stranger to this “abomination of desolation.” The original “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel the Prophet was the Babylonians destroying the temple in Jerusalem. In the year 70 AD the Romans also stood in the temple of Jerusalem, and deliberately held pagan worship in the temple as a completion of its desecration. The temple was the symbol of the Lord God’s presence among His people. With these abominations of desolation, the Lord God was no longer found to be in His temple, and among His people on account of their rampant unbelief and sinfulness.

The presence of the Lord God among His people is now found in the Lord + Jesus. The Lord God is now found in our very own flesh as a man. The Lord God now dwells with His people in the Person of the Lord + Jesus. He dwells with us through the pure preaching of the Word of God, and the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments. This is why we flee to this mountain of the Church, for here we find our Lord + Jesus in His Word, and His Sacraments. Indeed, we find our Lord + Jesus in His very Body and Blood given in bread and wine for us Christians to eat and drink for the forgiveness of our sins. This is the meal which He gives to us to remind us of His triumph over sin and death, by His own death and resurrection.

For the Church of His time also sought to destroy the Temple. They sought to destroy the Temple of the Lord + Jesus. The presence of the Lord God among His people in their flesh, they could not tolerate. Therefore, they destroyed the Temple of the Lord + Jesus on the tree of the holy cross. But our Lord + Jesus showed His power over death by raising Himself from death on the third day. He has now given us a pattern. Even as the Lord + Jesus was raised from the dead; we too shall be raised again from death on the Last Day. The Lord + Jesus will come again on the Last Day as quick as lightening, and give an eternal reward to all those who cling to Him in faith. In that eternal home, we will no longer face the great tribulation that we endure in these days. We will see the Lord + Jesus return on a cloud from Heaven, and we will hear the voice of the Archangel, and the sound of the trumpet, and we will be transported into Heaven for all eternity.

There, in that place, there will no longer be any sorrow over death, for we will live for all eternity. Here, in this place, we find comfort for our sorrow over death, for the promises of the Lord + Jesus are preached into our ears, and we receive the Sacraments that give to us faith to cling to the promises of forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. Therefore, my dear friends, flee to this mountain often. Rejoice that in this place we get a foretaste of the joys to come, as we are comforted with the promise of our eternal life in Heaven. Especially in these last few weeks of the Church’s year, where our focus is directed to the eternal life which our Lord + Jesus has won for us poor, miserable sinners, by His death on the tree of the holy cross; by the destruction of the Temple of His Body, which He raised again after three days. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who wilt come again in majesty to judge the quick and the dead, and call forth all who sleep in the graves, either to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of condemnation: we beseech Thee to be gracious unto us, and to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Thee, and, having been found acceptable in Thy sight, may on the Last Day be raised up to life everlasting, inherit the Kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world, and give Thee glory and praise, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*