

Populus Sion
St. Luke 21:25-36
December 8th, 2024
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Pawleys Island, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Your Redemption Draweth Nigh

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Cleanse our conscience, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, by the daily visitation of Thy grace, that, when Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, shall come, He may find us fit for His appearing, and ready to meet Him without spot, in the company of all His saints; 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.

My dear friends, during the Advent season the Church's focus, our focus, is on the advent, that is, the coming, of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Our Lord comes to us in three ways: He came as a Baby wrapped up in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, bearing our flesh, but without sin. He comes to us whenever two or three are gathered together in His Name, as we are gathered here today, to give us His gifts by the work of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace. Wherever His Word is preached in its truth and purity, and His Sacraments are administered according to His Divine institution, there the Lord + Jesus is in the midst of us; He has come to us, and grants us His precious gifts of forgiveness of sins, rescue from death and the devil, and eternal salvation. And our Lord + Jesus has promised to come to us, His people, again on the Last Day to take us from this vale of tears to our eternal home in Heaven. This third way our Lord comes to us is the focus of the Church's Propers today.

The Last Day holds a lot of fear for many people. Our Lord even says as much in the Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke: “Upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world.” Why does our Lord's Day hold so much fear for so many people? Even among Christians fear of the Last Day grips them. But why? It is because we are poor, miserable sinners, and we know it. We know that on account of our sins and trespasses we are worthy of none of the things which our Lord graciously grants us. We do not deserve forgiveness. We do not deserve rescue from death and the devil. We do not deserve eternal life. None of these things do we deserve solely on account of our own works and merits. There is no good thing living in us, and we know it. Therefore, the Last Day holds much trepidation for us.

We also fear that Day because we have not heeded our Lord's warning recorded in the Gospel

of St. Luke. We are weighed down with worldly things. We have let our “hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life.” Our life in this world consumes us. It is understandable, however, for this world and this life are ever before our eyes. The life of the world to come is a life that seems far off; a life that comes much later. That glorious life is not before us every second of every day. And so, we become consumed with the things of this life. And forget to focus on that great Day when our Lord will come again to us poor sinners and take us into our eternal home.

The evil world will be even worse off on that great Day. The evil world lives their lives with no understanding or expectation of that Day. This is why they will be in great distress when that Day comes. For they have not prepared for it at all. They will realize that all the worries and stresses of this life have been for nought. They will realize that all the worldly pursuits which have consumed them in this life do not matter at all. Therefore, men will faint from fear of that Day, because they will realize that they have wasted their lives in pursuit of worldly matters, and have neglected the truly important spiritual matters of faith in the only Lord and Savior of the world, our Lord + Jesus.

That mankind has wasted their lives in pursuit of the things of this world is the reason that they will be in great fear on that Day. It is the same reason that we often fear that Day, because we know that when we lose sight of our heavenly life, and become over focused on our life in this world, we are focusing on the wrong thing.

But my dear friends, the Last Day, the Day of our Lord’s coming to us should not fill us with fear and trembling. Our Lord + Jesus tells us in today’s pericope that when He comes, we should “look up, and lift up [our] heads; because [our] redemption draweth nigh.” It is not a Day of wrath and mourning for those who cling in faith to the Lord + Jesus and His works and merits, but it is a Day of rescue from this evil world. We will be with our Lord! What a great Day for us poor sinners! Our Lord will have come to take us from this valley of sorrow to our eternal heavenly home. There, there will be no more weeping or sorrow. There will be no more struggling with sin; no more death and pain. There we will be in joy forever. The antiphon to the Introit for today puts it best: “Daughter of Zion (that is us, the Church) behold, thy Salvation cometh. The Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard: and ye shall have gladness of heart.”

Our Lord will not come to all those who cling to Him in faith as a terrible judge, but He will come as a rescuing deliverer; He will come as our Savior. He will not come to His faithful ones as the One Who delivers them into Hell, but He will come to us as the One Who will deliver us into our eternal home in Heaven. Why be in fear and trepidation of that Last Day? Why fear the Last Day? Our Lord + Jesus Who has come to us in our flesh, and fulfilled the Law perfectly for us, and paid the penalty of our transgressions with His innocent suffering and death, without any merit or worthiness in us, will also come on that Last Day to us in the same fashion. He will come in mercy to deliver us poor sinners.

Indeed, He continues to come to us here in this place with His gifts of grace, His means of grace. He comes to us in mercy here at the font, and here at the altar. He comes to us when we kneel in penitence and confess our sins. He comes to us in His glorious Word from this pulpit as His grace and mercy is preached into our ears. He comes to us when we share our faith in Him, and all the good things He has done for us with each other here in this place. Our Lord has already come to this world showing His great love and mercy, and He continues to come to His beloved Church in love and mercy to show us how He will come, to all those who cling to Him in faith, on that Last Day. He will come to us poor, miserable sinners in love and mercy, and take us from this evil world to our eternal heavenly home.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us do two things: first, let us not be weighed down with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life. For this life will pass away and be no more. The time of our Lord’s coming again approaches quickly. Learn the lesson from the parable of the fig tree. We can see

the signs of the seasons of the fig tree, or any fruit tree for that matter. We see it flower and bud, and bear leaves. We see it grow and produce fruit. The signs of the Day of our Lord's coming are also plainly visible for us to see. Therefore, do not be concerned with the things of this life, but look to the life of the world to come. For the Day of our Lord fast approaches. The second thing we should do, my friends, is we should shake off the fear of that Day of our Lord. For it is not a Day of fear and trembling for us who cling in faith to Him. He has redeemed us from sin and death. He has forgiven us of all our sins. He has promised to come and take us from this terrible world to a world filled with eternal joy.

He will come to us, His Church, to the Daughter of Zion, the perfection of beauty, and shine upon us with His grace and mercy. Look up, my dear friends, the Day of our redemption draweth nigh. The Day when our Lord will come and fulfill all that He has promised: to take us to the Promised Land of Heaven with all the saints who have gone before us. There we will join the heavenly choir, and we will sing forever and ever the eternal Liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom. His praise for our redemption will forever be on our lips. We will bow down to the ground and worship Him, and declare that He alone is worthy to receive all glory, laud, and honor.

Soon, my friends, our Lord will come with power and great glory. The Son of Man will come upon the clouds. This sinful, unbelieving, and evil world will be shaken and faint from fear. We, however, will rejoice and sing that our redemption from the bonds of sin and death has finally come. We will be free from pain and sorrow forever and ever. Therefore, my dear friends, let us watch and pray continually for that great Day, and cry out "Come, Lord + Jesus, quickly!" Come, our dear Lord, and do not tarry. Rescue us from this vale of tears, and take us to our eternal home. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, 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!