

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Thursday, November 29, 2012
Luke 21:25-36 Advent 1 series C.
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz



²⁵ “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶ People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ²⁷ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” ²⁹ He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰ When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. ³¹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ³⁴ “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

There are people who call themselves Doomsday Preppers. These are people who think in the near future the day will come when civilization as we know it – will come to an end. That there will be economic collapse – suddenly all businesses will fail – banks will fail – all our money will become worthless – all our insurance and 401ks and pensions will be worthless. Society will collapse – marriages and families – grandmas and grandpas and neighbors and relatives will cease to look out for each other. There will be an electromagnetic pulse – and in a moment everything will be “fried” – no electricity to light or heat our homes – no city water or

sewer – no radio, no TV, no cable, no *Internet* – no phones! There will be terrorist acts of an unprecedented scale – a nuclear incident that will make huge tracts of land uninhabitable – a shortage of gas and oil and natural gas – even fire wood. There will be people from different countries invading the US and the spread of horrible diseases – for which there is no cure! So these people are preparing for the end – stockpiling food and fuel, gas masks and medications. They are preparing to defend their own in bunkers far away from anyone and everyone! They are preparing for the end! Today this first weekend of a new Church Year – we are going to think about Judgment Day. Not a day when law and order are replaced by anarchy. But the day when Jesus will come to take us home to Heaven! Today we hear the Lord Jesus say,

Our Redemption is Drawing Near!

1. Don't be scared

2. Be careful and watchful.

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on today is from the Gospel of St. Luke! What is unique about the Gospel of Luke? Do you know? Could you tell someone if they asked you in the parking lot of the Piggly Wiggly? The Gospel of Luke is in fact a letter – from the physician Luke to his friend Theophilus. Theophilus – means friend of God! What a wonderful concept that is! Luke wrote his gospel to Theophilus and Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles – as a letter to Theophilus, too! The Gospel of Luke is unique in its multitude of miracles of healing. If you get sick – you need to go to the doctor – where they will weigh you – check your blood pressure – take samples of your blood – listen to your heart and your breathing and much more – in order to diagnose your condition. Then they will give you medication – which over the next days or so – will make you better. When Jesus healed people – he simply willed it – and immediately they were entirely better – better than they had ever been! Luke is also the Gospel of parables – teaching stories – earthly stories with heavenly meanings. That sets the Gospel of Luke apart.

Near the end of his brief 3 year public ministry Jesus began to tell his disciples more and more clearly how he would suffer to redeem us. Jesus also talked about the near and distant future – the fall of the city of Jerusalem – and the final judgment that will come at the end of time here!

Jesus said: ²⁵ **“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars.** Do you pay attention to space? It has been said black holes – do not contain a little man with a flash light looking for the circuit breaker! There are indeed wondrous things in space – that for thousands of years – people have never seen. What do you know of space – the final frontier – these are the voyages of the star ship Enterprise – its 5 year mission to seek out new life and new civilizations – to boldly go where no man has gone before! Do you know that outer space or simply space is the void that exists between celestial bodies, including the Earth. It is not completely empty, but consists of a hard vacuum containing a low density of particles: predominately a plasma of hydrogen and helium, as well as electromagnetic radiation, magnetic fields, and neutrinos. Observations and theory suggest that it also contains dark matter and dark energy. The baseline temperature as set by the background radiation left over from the beginning of time is only 2.7 Kelvin – in contrast, temperatures in the corona of stars can read over a million Kelvin...I could go on – but I think it’s safe to say most of us don’t know too much about string theory and theoretical astro-physics. From time to time there is something on my Internet home page that says the Hubble telescope has spotted something here to fore never seen before – but most of the time it doesn’t change life as we know it – between Milwaukee and Madison and Johnson Creek and Clyman – and so? Jesus, though is telling us – when you hear about disturbances in the Force – be aware. This is a reminder that all the stuff in space isn’t here forever! As *ginormous* as all this is – it’s only temporary! If you are blessed with the opportunity to go say to Africa or the Amazon Rain Forest – in the dark – in the night – when there are no city lights for miles and miles – you will see stars in the sky – the likes of which you can never see here. Go to the Amazon and look up – and you will see the Southern Cross – a most wondrous reminder that Jesus died to forgive me. It is when you look up at the stars – like glitter thrown on a huge black velvet sheet – that you are reminded how insignificant we are in this world. And that Jesus should care about me? How amazing is that?!

On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Have you seen the pictures of the utter devastation from Hurricane Sandy? Up in Rhode Island there are places where the beach sand covers roads and highways – where the sand is piled high inside people’s homes! The roaring and tossing of the sea? All you

need is for a down spout to fall off – and you can get water in your basement from the rain. All you need is for snow to melt on your roof – and then refreeze – and the next thing you know – water is dripping into your attic – and then – water is leaking through your ceiling! Pipes anywhere in your house – under your sink – by your garbage disposal work loose – and the next thing you know – there is water getting under the linoleum in your kitchen – the water thing in the door of your refrigerator gets messed up – and there is water where it isn't supposed to be there, too! We don't need an ocean to cause water damage! In this world infected and spoiled and frustrated by sin – things can go wrong and they will go wrong. We dasn't be surprised and we dasn't be discouraged! Jesus will not let us be tested beyond what we can bear. With the trouble will come the ability to persevere!

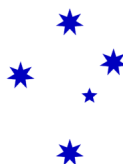
³⁴ **“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap.** This is the time for parties and celebrations – from Thanksgiving through Christmas and literally into the New Year! People have parties in their homes – where they work and at places that serve food and drink. There is danger from what's known as “binge drinking!” Binge drinking is dangerous for people who don't drink all the time – don't drink every day or every weekend – just once in a while. The danger is – once you start you don't stop. It can happen very easily. You go to a party – and you are all dressed up – and all excited – and truth be told – a little bit nervous. When you get to the party the person who is the host wants to show good holiday hospitality so they offer you something to drink! They want to show they are generous and thoughtful so they have lots of things to drink – and when they pour you a drink – it's a big drink and a strong drink. They are not cheap – they are generous and thoughtful – and being a little nervous and so – you drink it pretty quickly. And then they notice – your glass is even partly empty – so they offer to freshen your drink up! And they keep freshening your drink – when it's half empty or even just a third empty – and the next thing you know – you don't know how much you have had to drink because it was a half and a third and another half and two thirds but then they really refilled it – and who knows?! When have you had too much to drink? Some people think you have had too much to drink when the room starts spinning – and you stumble and almost fall down – or your tummy starts to turn – or you get sick or you

wake up the next morning and feel like you have the flu! One of my teachers used to say – you have had too much to drink – as soon as you say or do anything – anything – that you would not do if you only had soda or juice or coffee or tea to drink. Drinking alcohol sometimes makes people say and do things that they regret! That’s never ever good! The next few weeks – as we gather to celebrate the birth of our Savior – it’s more important than ever – to be very careful not to drink too much beer or wine or brandy – or Jack Daniels or apple-tini’s no matter how good they taste! These next few weeks are time to show how much we love our Savior who came to take all our sins away! These next few weeks are time to prepare our hearts to welcome the Christ-child anew with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs!

³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” There are people living in genuine fear that a horrible physical disaster is going to befall the earth. One person has collected over 11,200 types of seeds – and plans to build a type of bio-sphere – to try and rebuild all the different kinds of plant life that would be destroyed if there were a horrible nuclear disaster of immense proportions! It makes you wonder if there should be somebody trying to preserve all the different kinds of animals and birds and fish and bugs – kind of like Noah’s Ark – and so? There are people who practice close combat and hand to hand combat – thinking the day will come when they will have to defend their stash of food and water from people who will try and break in and steal it all from them. So they practice again and again – how to pound an intruder – how to disarm someone who comes after you with a gun or a knife. There are people who live in what used to be missile silo – safe from any incoming attack! This is all well and good – to take good care of your family! But the fact remains – the wages of sin is death. The gift of God – eternal life with Jesus safe in Heaven where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain! Judgment Day is closer now than when we first believed! By grace alone Jesus will make us ready as our Redemption draws near! Even so come quickly Lord Jesus. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Pastor Anthony E. Schultz



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