

## Sermon for the Last Sunday of the Church Year – Matthew 25:1-13

In the Name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

“There will always be tomorrow.” That’s what they say. And for us procrastinators, we make it our mantra. “There will always be tomorrow.” But in the parable of the ten virgins, time runs out. In this parable, our Lord lays out what the kingdom of heaven is for His disciples. He especially tells of His kingdom’s consummation. Wise virgins awaited the arrival of their Bridegroom, believing His promise that He would return, even though they didn’t know the time. Foolish virgins were unprepared for His coming and paid the final consequence of being excluded from the marriage feast. The point of the parable is summed up in the final verse: “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

This is very true. No man knows the day or hour of Christ’s second coming and final judgment. But this does not mean that we know nothing of Christ’s second coming. We are not left in the dark. The Scriptures are clear that on the Last Day Christ will visibly appear in glory with His angels. He will be seated on His throne. All the governments of the world will give way to the everlasting reign of Christ. Human history itself will be just that: history. Time will come to an end. There will be no tomorrow.

At this time, the dead will be raised. The bodies of all believers, both those that were resting in graves and those who are alive will be glorified. Our bodies will be imperishable and indestructible. Also, Christ will judge all people. We who trust in His mercy and forgiveness for us will receive what the souls of those who have gone before us already have, eternal rest and comfort with Jesus. Those who trust in themselves receive eternal punishment and separation from God. Satan also will be vanquished and banished forever with them. But this current creation in which we now live will be cleansed by fire. The earth, and the stars and planets will be made new again. Paradise lost in the Garden of Eden will be paradise restored in the New Jerusalem, the new earth.

In this paradise we will be reunited with all those who have died in the faith. There will be a great feast with unending rejoicing. At this feast we will be clothed in Christ’s righteousness as with fine white linen. We will see Christ. Christ will dwell with us forever. So there’s a lot that will happen on the Last and Eternal Day.

God has set the day when He will return to judge the world according to His righteousness. No judgment beyond this will be held. In the book of Acts, St. Paul would appeal to Caesar, to a higher court. As a Roman citizen, he had the right to do so. Appealing to a higher court also happens in our country. Cases can be tried all the way to the top – to the Supreme Court. On the Last Day, the Day of Judgment, there is no higher court. God has endured with much patience all the evil in the world. But in that one day, all evil will cease. There will be a separation from God forever. Or, to say it the way of today's Gospel, the door to the marriage feast will be shut.

And still, we must remember that God has appointed Christ Jesus to be Judge. And this is Good News to us. Christ is Judge but He is also our Mercy Seat. Judgment shall be given according to faith in Christ. Whoever believes in Him has eternal life. This saying is, in fact, true: "There will always be tomorrow" because in Christ Jesus, tomorrow never ends. He brings in the Eternal Day, when sighing, suffering, shame will end and the only tears will be joyful ones. He that believes in the Son shall not perish and will not be brought to judgment. We believe in Christ. When His disciples asked Him what they should do to work the works of God, Jesus answers, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

Neither our love for God nor our love for our fellowman will ever be enough that we can stand guiltless with acts of love before the judgment seat of God. Therefore, in Christ, God has atoned for all our sins and made it possible for us to be partakers of forgiveness and life eternal, through faith.

To have Christ is everything. Life and good works will follow. The thief on the cross could no longer do good works, yet he was saved. When opportunities present themselves for serving our neighbors, we will do them. But we won't bring these good deeds up on the Day of Judgment. Let us instead be surprised and shocked when we hear of our good deeds. Let us remember that we are poor sinners who trust in God's mercy for the sake of Christ. In so doing, there is no condemnation. Amen.

The Peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. ✠BJF✠