

November 13, 2016
 Sermon for Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost
 St Peter Lutheran Church
 Bowie, TX
 Larry Knobloch, Pastor
 Luke 21:5–28

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Luke 21:5–28 (ESV)

⁵ And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, ⁶ “As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” ⁷ And they asked him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?” ⁸ And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. ⁹ And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.” ¹⁰ Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake. ¹³ This will be your opportunity to bear witness. ¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. ¹⁷ You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your lives. ²⁰ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, ²² for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. ²³ Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. ²⁴ They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. ²⁵ “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, ²⁶ people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

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

Amen.

Life is complicated, challenging, and sometimes difficult—no matter who you are.

When you are a Christian—a disciple of Jesus—life can be more complicated.

You see things in your own life that should not be there, and you struggle against them. You look at the world, at history, at society, and see even more things that are *not* honoring the Son of God or serving His purposes. It would be easy—very easy—to deal with the difficulty of life by withdrawing from the world, playing it safe as you get discouraged and maybe even a little scared.

The words of Jesus in Luke 21 promise His disciples, standing with Him there in the first century in Jerusalem, that their lives will be hard—incredibly hard—in the times that lead up to the year AD 70.

In that year, Jesus' prediction of judgment came true: the religious leaders who rejected Him were punished by God through the destruction of the temple and the laying waste the city of Jerusalem by the hands of the Romans.

What were the disciples to do? Better yet, what are we to do, even though our lives may never become *that* difficult?

Jesus' words invite us to see past the trouble, see past the sorrow and evil in the world, to the day when He will return to judge the living and the dead, and to remove all sin from our lives and make all things right! Because it is *Jesus* who says these things, we can be confident that God is going to rescue and redeem all His Christian children.

No matter how bad it gets, a world still in rebellion against God cannot overcome His plans. Long ago, the story seemed to be moving toward a very, very bad end. But the world's victory over Jesus was shattered!

Jesus, Israel's true King, had come to the capital city. There He found that all of the forces were set up against Him—chief priests, Sadducees, Pharisees, and Roman authorities.

It actually seemed as if they had already won! Jesus was arrested, condemned, and executed. Dead usually stays dead.

But not the Son of God; Jesus lives! He lives forever! And His promises and His words endure and live forever because He does!

But what about you? Your sin—and mine—has the power to take your life toward a very, very bad end. But the victory of your sin over you has been shattered!

You and I are part of the problem of this old, dying, rebellious world. When I am greedy, I'm pretending that I am Lord over "my" things. I'm pretending to be God. I work hard for what I have so shouldn't what I have be mine? Mine first, not my neighbors, not God's. Like the old Jimmy Stewart movie, *Shenandoah*. "Lord, we cleared this land. We plowed it, sowed it, and harvest it. We cook the harvest. It wouldn't be here and we wouldn't be eating it if we hadn't done it all ourselves. We worked dog-bone hard for every crumb and morsel, but we thank you Lord just the same for the food we're about to eat, amen."

It's not just our stuff or things either, when I hold back from loving or forgiving, or when I judge another in anger, I am trying to cast Jesus down from His rightful throne. We've seen plenty of that during this past year with the electing and all of the words spoken in anger or ill intent to our neighbors. I'm not going to waste my time repeating any of it.

All of these sins should and would bring you and me down to death—eternal death and separation from God's life and love.

But God had another plan. He sent His Son and Jesus went down into death for your sin, and Jesus came back out of death and shattered your sin.

You don't have to fear. You belong to Him now. You are free.

The world may be careening out of control (vv 5–12, 16–17, 20–26). Whether it's politics and

governments, or catastrophes and disasters, terrorism or stock-market corruption, there's a lot that could frighten us. But in the middle of all of it, God provides His Word.

Jesus' words give us hope and strength and perspective (vv 13–15, 18–19). Again our Text: “¹⁸ *But not a hair of your head will perish.* ¹⁹ *By your endurance you will gain your lives.*”

It applies to you, to the world right now! He says that I have rescued you! You are mine!

It applies to the future too: I will rescue you! You are mine!

God's Word assures us that he is moving the world toward the goal of his Day (v 27). “*And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*”

So then, look forward to the great Day with confidence in Jesus Christ (v 28)! As He says: “*Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*”

The Day is surely drawing near—and God is in control of everything!

In the first century, the Jewish leadership perhaps thought they were in charge—they could stop Jesus and remain the leaders of God's people. But the Romans came and took them away. That was a little “judgment day” on their rebellion against Jesus.

No doubt, the Romans thought they were in charge. But the Roman Empire has been gone for a long, long time. God is running the show, and history is moving toward His future. Not mankind's.

Every time you read or hear about a war or a disaster, every time there is a new election, in our country, Russia or any other nation, let it remind you that this tired, troubled world is moving toward the goal, the plan, that God has for it when Christ returns in glory. The coming Day is Jesus Christ's Day! He is in charge, and He will set things right.

Looking trouble in the eye, we need not fear—because of our Lord, Jesus Christ (v 18)! Jesus said, “*straighten up and raise your heads.*”

What a gracious words! Because we deserve the opposite: "Fall on your face, and bow your head in shame!"

But Jesus makes us able to stand, forgiven and accepted and loved.

He lifts up our head to face the future, and even the last great Day, confident of our salvation.

Remember Jesus' Words and believe:

God is getting ready to redeem His children! In Jesus' name:

Amen.

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

Amen.