

2ND LAST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

11/18/18

Mount Calvary, West View

DANIEL 12: 1-3, HEBREWS 10: 11-25, MARK 13: 1-13

HYMNS: JESUS CHRIST, MY SURE DEFENSE LSB #741,

THE DAY IS SURELY DRAWING NEAR LSB #508,

JESUS, THY BLOOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LSB #563

Theme: When Will The End Come

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

Our Text is from the continuation of Saint Mark's Gospel, the 13th Chapter:

“Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

What would you consider to be off limits in terms of destroying something to make a statement? So, the terrorists flew planes into the world trade center to try and make a statement about American imperialism and excess consumerism or whatever other people have said. Was that a big enough statement to elicit the strong reaction? After all, they destroyed a major impression to the New York skyline. Was it the crashing into the Pentagon as a statement against the only first-world-power left to stop being the world's policeman big enough to catch your attention? Seems to me you mess with the Pentagon, you mess with the full force of our US military. Perhaps it was the invasion of the Tree of Life synagogue that made a big enough statement that we need to know that there are problems out there and we need to listen. Or perhaps the million-man march, or the blood on fur coats, or the death of a biker on the streets to make us aware we need to share the road?

What does all this have to do with our readings today? ***As He came out of the temple, one of His disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”*** Indeed,

from a worldly perspective it was a magnificent building. According to Josephus, The Temple built by Herod to take the place of that erected by the Jews under Zerubbabel and restored and embellished under Judas Maccabaeus, was a complex of buildings of which any nation might have been proud. Beginning in 20-19 B. C., the sanctuary had been rebuilt in about eighteen months, but it took forty-six years to finish all the buildings as planned by Herod; the last stones of the enclosures with their beautiful sculptured work were not put into place until the year 64 A.D. The disciples thus had good reasons for pointing out to Jesus some of the immense stones, and they could well admire the immense porticoes, with their slender Corinthian columns and the great central buildings, rising almost 180 feet over the Court of the Gentiles, its marble coping and golden ornaments making it by far the most conspicuous edifice in the entire city.

Jesus freely admits that the great size and the magnificence of the Temple are unquestioned, but He also knows, according to His prophetic wisdom, what terrible destruction and devastation would be worked here less than four decades from this moment in time. There will be those who care not a whit about the majesty, about the symbolism of the design to bring man's finite mind up to a heavenly revelation and meditation, about the very seat of Almighty God upon the altar therein, and there will be a destruction that has never been known before or since of such a great and mighty masterpiece and vision of Jewish religious life. So, the question now is, would this be enough to get your attention?

What attention is trying to be gotten? Well, the destruction of the temple will be God's wrath poured out due to unbelief and the rejection of the Messiah. Worse yet, there will be even greater destruction as the world continues. *“Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray.”* Not only this, but, *“you [will] hear of wars and rumors of wars... nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines.* And it will not be just like the twin towers and the Pentagon, where we can say its not going to happen to me, but it will become personal, *“For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be*

*beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death,*ö yes, it will become very personal. It will be so personal that your very faith will be attacked. When all this comes crashing down upon you, will this be enough to get your attention and turn to God and be ready for the end? Oh, there is one more thing: *öThese are but the beginning of the birth pains.ö*

How can this be but the beginning? Because Jesus has not come yet. That is the difference between the 2nd-last Sunday and the Last Sunday of the Church year, we are still looking forward to the Second Coming of Jesus. Until He comes there is an opportunity to do something, so Jesus gives us a glimpse into the end of days, so that we can do the work necessary until the night comes when no man can work. It is the same message from way back in Daniel, when we were informed that the great Arch-Angel, Michael, will reveal the end, and the separation of the sheep from the goats. (No, not Tom Brady, although that does give one pauseí any commandment against deflated footballs? I think Obadiah speaks of such.) Until this happens, we have an opportunity to preach a salvation not of ourselves, but of Christ.

The destruction of the Temple was an opportunity to tell people, *öNo longer do you sacrifice innocent animals and plants for sins; the One Sent from the Father has come to take away your guilt and restore you fully to the Father! Jesus Christ has come and died as the final sacrifice for sins, and His body and blood shed upon that cross truly do forgive you all your sins and make you one with the Father! The temple is no more, for the Son is found not with brick and mortar, but with The Word and Sacraments! His greatest Temple is your body and the great throne is in your heart when you believe and are baptized into the One True Faith.ö* Head again the words to the Hebrews: *öWhere there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.ö* With the great promise: *I will remember their sins and their*

lawless deeds no more.

Indeed, Jesus warns us to be on our guard, for the Gospel must be proclaimed. Many have surmised that until everybody has heard the Gospel, the end will not come. If that were true, then Jesus will never come for there will always be someone who has not heard the Gospel nor let His Kingdom come. However, there will *always* be an opportunity to preach Christ and His forgiveness, so be ready to do so. Even if you are standing before some unbeliever who is about to take your life; As some have said, "put a gun to your head." I must say, that is not really the best opportunity to have a clear mind and to speak eloquently, but here again, Jesus gives us a sweet Gospel to understand, "***Do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.***" Truly if you believe, then the Words will come for the Holy Spirit will not leave you void but take the opportunity to reveal Christ and His Salvation. That is His promise to you, as long as you have life and breath.

Being in a state of Grace through your baptism allows you to look at this world, see its own demise at its own hand and say, "As lovely as this world is, I have a greater, far better, world to come in Christ Jesus my Lord." The baptismal faith you have bears this truth and you can rest secure in the faith that this world can never separate you from your Savior. Knowing this, it is easy to share a faith with those who do fret for the world's destruction and help them focus on the one to come. After all, as Martin Luther once penned, "**There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment.**" Do not fear the end, my friends, but welcome the opportunities to share your comfort with those who need to hear. In our Triune God's Name, we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

AMEN+

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