



“The End is Nearish...Maybe”

Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost
5:30 p.m. Saturday, November 10, 2016
The Reverend John H. Brock
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

2 Thessalonians 3:6B13; Luke 21:5B19

Grace to you and peace, from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

Jesus has finally done it. What he started way back in Chapter 9, he's finally brought to completion. Way back, at the beginning of the summer, in Chapter 9, we heard that *Jesus has his face set toward Jerusalem*. That was kind of code for, he's heading to the capital, he's heading to the seat of power, both political and spiritual. And he knows that when he sets there, he is going there to die.

So, in Chapter 19, just a few verses after our lesson last week about Zacchaeus, Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. What's important for our reading is **not** what he does once he's there; it's not his triumphal entry, or clearing out of the temple. What is important to us is that, in our lesson today, Jesus and the disciples are talking about the temple building itself, and how beautiful it is, what a magnificent and imposing structure it is.

Then, Jesus makes what sounds like almost a threat against the temple:

“As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.”

And, rightly I think, the disciples ask for clarification, to which Jesus responds with this whole litany of *beware and be careful*; life will change; and war, earthquake, famine & plagues will be reported. And because of the disciples being human, they tended to take what Jesus said to be fact. And because we are human, too often many of **us** look at this passage and want to take it literally.

I wonder, though, if you were like me when I read through this passage; I could hear that great song from a few years ago by the group R.E.M.:

It's the end of the world as we know it. It's the end of the world as we know it. It's the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine.

Because I do think that is one of the ways that we can read this passage from Luke. Jesus is talking to his followers, attempting to prepare them for the end of the world as they know it. But that day was coming sooner than they thought.

Admittedly, Jesus is talking in a bit of a bunch of cloaked language, but Jesus is talking about when he will return after his death. Yet for the disciples, the end of the world as **they** know it will happen in just a couple of days. That will happen when Jesus is

arrested, put on trial, sentenced, and publicly executed. Because **that** event *radically* changed their world.

But radical change is something that I think we 21st Century North Americans should come to expect, almost as a matter of course. How many of us grew up without a television in our home, Or, if we did have one, it was small, and black and white? And how many TVs do you have in your home, today? Or, for that matter, in your pocket?

What about phones? I'm going to guess that many of us here know *how* to work a rotary dial phone, even though, **if** we have a land line phone in our house, it is most likely push button phone. But the phones most of us carry in our pockets - that have only been around for the last ten years - have more computing power than the room sized computers that put a human being on the moon.

Or transportation. We've moved from horse and buggy, to horseless carriage, to automobile, to families owning *multiple* vehicles, in, realistically, just a matter of decades.

So, all this is to say that, the world changes. The world as we *know* it, becomes a world we *don't* know. Our world can change with an IED; a suicide bomber; a drunken driver. Our world can even change with a presidential election. The end of our world is a constant thing.

That might be part of the reason I have been so appalled, listening to the news these past few days, and hearing or reading reports about how supporters of one candidate are attacking and assaulting supporters of the other candidate. Those attacks have been: hollering racial slurs; attacking individuals because of bumper stickers; rioting and burning. I am certain there have been many more of which I am not aware. To me, *none* of those responses are acceptable, regardless of for whom you voted.

This is when we need to listen to the words of Paul as he wrote to the Thessalonians:
¹³Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

But it **is** wearying to do what is right. And so much easier, isn't it, at times, to do what **we** want to do, rather than what we *know* is the **right** thing to do. Right now, many of us want to cry in protest, strike in anger, hurt others, because we ourselves are hurting, inside. Let me say, none of those are the right responses.

Our world ends all the time, **and**, our world comes to us, new, all the time. So that when the *Real End* comes, when Christ does return, none of us will know when. We need to be ready **now**. We need to act with God's mercy and graciousness, **now**.

As believers, we are called to look out for the underprivileged. We are called to bring food to the hungry; to give shelter in bad weather to those who have none; to help those who are unable to help themselves, no matter **what** their political affiliation, their ethnic heritage, their skin color, their gender identity, or whatever. Jesus helped lepers, whores, beggars: the rejects of society. We are called to do no less.

That is what the gospel of Christ Jesus - that is what the **actions** of Christ Jesus - say we are to do. And for those who want to be politically active, and *don't* support what they perceive to be policies that *may or may not* ever be enacted, then they, too, are called, **not** to arms, **not** to assault; they are called to *action*, to live out that love and care, that grace and forgiveness, for those who are not able, for whatever reasons, to do so for themselves.

Because, by doing what is right, by looking out for others, Jesus says,
¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your souls.

It's the end of the world as I know, and in Christ Jesus, we **will** all be fine.

Amen.

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