

Sunday, November 19, 2017
24th Sunday after Pentecost

INTRODUCTION

Our readings during November speak of the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the Lord will be filled with wrath and distress. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ’s coming among us.

PRELUDE

“O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright”

John Leavett

***GATHERING SONG**

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”

ELW 815

**I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus.**

Refrain

**In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

**I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of righteousness, shine on my path,
and show me the way to the Father. *Refrain***

**I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus. *Refrain***

***GREETING**

☞ *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

☞ *And also with you.*

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

“Lord, Be Glorified”

ELW 744

**In my life, Lord, be glorified, be glorified;
in my life, Lord, be glorified today.**

**In our song, Lord, be glorified, be glorified;
in our song, Lord, be glorified today.**

**In your church, Lord, be glorified, be glorified;
in your church, Lord, be glorified today.**

**In your world, Lord, be glorified, be glorified.
In your world, Lord, be glorified today.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

☐ *Righteous God, our merciful master,*

☑ **you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen!**

ANTHEM

“Let Us Talents and tongues Employ”

arr. Austin Lovelace

Chancel Choir

FIRST READING

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Zephaniah (like the prophet Amos in last week’s first reading) presents the day of the Lord as one of judgment and wrath. Descriptions of the last day in the New Testament include details taken from Old Testament accounts of the day of the Lord.

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD!

For the day of the LORD is at hand;
the LORD has prepared a sacrifice,
he has consecrated his guests.

¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who rest complacently on their dregs,
those who say in their hearts,
“The LORD will not do good,
nor will he do harm.”

¹³Their wealth shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.

Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.

¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;

the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter,
the warrior cries aloud there.
¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.
¹⁷I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the LORD,
their blood shall be poured out like dust,
and their flesh like dung.
¹⁸Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the LORD's wrath;
in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Reflection

What does the prophet demand from the people? (verse 7) Does it strike you as strange that the Lord is preparing a sacrifice? (Normally the people sacrifice to the Lord or to the gods they worship.) What or who will be sacrificed? (verses 12-13) Why will the people be punished? What will happen to the complacent rich? (Complacent means satisfied with how things are.) What would you say about the faith of those "who say in their hearts, 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do harm'"? What do you remember from the readings we've had about the day of the Lord. What does Zephaniah say about it? (verses 14-18) Do you think this is meant to scare the people into changing their lives? How do you react when you read about the day of the Lord?

PSALM 90:1-12

¹Lord, you have | been our refuge
from one generation | to another.
²**Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the | earth were born,
from age to age | you are God.**
³You turn us back to the | dust and say,
"Turn back, O child- | ren of earth."
⁴**For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when | it is past
and like a watch | in the night;**
⁵you sweep them away | like a dream,
they fade away suddenly | like the grass:
⁶**in the morning it is | green and flourishes;**

in the evening it is dried | up and withered.

⁷For we are consumed | by your anger;
we are afraid because | of your wrath.

⁸**Our iniquities you have | set before you,
and our secret sins in the light | of your countenance.**

⁹When you are angry, all our | days are gone;
we bring our years to an end | like a sigh.

¹⁰**The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength | even eighty;
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and | we are gone.**

¹¹Who regards the power | of your wrath?
Who rightly fears your | indignation?

¹²**So teach us to num- | ber our days
that we may apply our | hearts to wisdom.**

Reflection

*What do you imagine when you read verse 1? What is the emphasis of the psalmist about God's time? (verses 1-2) What is the contrast between God's eternity and human mortality? (verses 3-4) To what does the psalmist compare human life? (verses 5-6) What is frightening about death, in this psalm? (verses 7-8, 9-11) What are we humans to learn from meditating on the shortness of our lives? (verse 12) As you grow older (for those of you who notice that you **are** growing older) what do you notice about time? Does it fit with what the psalmist says? What will we understand if we gain a wise heart?*

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Though we do not know and cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Reflection

This text seems very timely. We hear time and time again about people cut off suddenly from life—the shootings in Las Vegas and in Texas, sudden death from opioid poisoning, earthquakes and floods, hurricanes and tornadoes. . . . What does Paul, the writer of this letter, remind his

readers (that's us!) about the day of the Lord? (verse 2) Does God protect us from such destruction? (verse 3) In the midst of such times, what does it mean to be children of light and of the day? (verses 4-5) What does it mean to "keep awake"? What is God's intention for us in evil times? (verses 8-10) How can we encourage one another in these times? (verse 11) Paul's assurance is that the Thessalonians are doing that now. How do you see us encouraging each other and building each other up?

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION v. 1**

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Alleluia.**

GOSPEL

Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Reflection

Here is another parable I don't get, or at least don't like very well. This parable is about a very rich man who, as a kind of test, "invests" his riches in three slaves. The amount of money is

about fifteen years' worth of wages for a daily worker. He invests his money according to the ability of each of his servants. Each slave apparently lives up to the master's expectations. (verses 14-19) When the master returns, the slaves who were given five and two talents doubled their master's money and returned it to him, and were rewarded. The third servant, who had buried the money in the ground, gave it back, and from his words to his master, we find out that the master was a crooked man—perhaps a gangster or a sleazy politician—and the slave was “thrown out into the darkness” and his money given to the richest servant. What's the point? Are we supposed to work hard to double Jesus' money? (What money?!) The third slave is like a resister—he doesn't want to participate in his master's dishonesty. If this sounds familiar, the master reminds me of those who would steal from the poor and give to the rich—the real world, right? What is he saying to his disciples, and to us? This parable comes, in Matthew's gospel, two days before Jesus will be betrayed, tried, and crucified. Which is what often happens to people who speak truth to power, as the third slave did. They get thrown into the outer darkness and just disappear. And what happened to Jesus? Maybe if we follow him, we will resist those who are sure that those who have much will always get the reward. The day of the Lord is coming. How will we prepare? By investing in the world as it is, or by resisting? What do you think?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Kris Langdon

MISSION MOMENT

Ryan Hildebrand

SERMON

“Use It or Lose It”

Rev. Roger Lenander

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love”

ELW 708

Refrain

**Jesu, Jesu,
fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbors we have from you.**

**Kneels at the feet of his friends,
silently washes their feet,
master who acts as a slave to them. *Refrain***

**Neighbors are wealthy and poor,
varied in color and race,
neighbors are near us and far away. *Refrain***

**These are the ones we will serve,
these are the ones we will love;
all these are neighbors to us and you. *Refrain***

Kneel at the feet of our friends,

silently washing their feet:
this is the way we will live with you. *Refrain*

***APOSTLES' CREED**

**☩ I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen!**

***PRAYER SONG**

"Let My Prayer Be a Fragrant Offering"

**Let my prayer be a fragrant offering,
as incense to you arise.
Let my prayer be a fragrant offering,
my hands lifted up in praise.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Welcoming God's reign of righteousness and mercy, let us pray with people of every time and place.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church. Enliven its witness in ecumenical ministries, feeding programs, and new ventures. Open our hearts to friendships that share faith, and open our mouths to share your good news. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for parks and open spaces, for clean air and clear water. Help us protect places where we are reminded of God's work in creation and find renewal. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have been and are still today enslaved, trafficked, or oppressed. Make clear the needs of those who are silenced by suffering, that we may listen and bring an end to exploitation. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for those who cry out for healing, hope, or help, and for those for whom we have promised to pray for *especially Carroll, Alivia, Kay, Lin, and Linda* and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (*pause for 10 seconds*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for this congregation and the South Sudanese congregation for the talents and treasures each person brings. Bring new talents to blossom among us, as we encourage and build up one another. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for all the men and women of our armed forces, at home and abroad. We especially lift up to you, Jason Shields. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Lord, our dwelling place in all generations, we remember with thanksgiving all who have died in you. Teach us to count our days as gifts from you. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Receive these prayers and the hopes and concerns of our hearts, O God, as we entrust into your loving care all for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P *The peace of Christ be with you always.*

C **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

“Take My Life, That I May Be”

ELW 583

Sing the refrain, all verses, end with the refrain

Refrain

**Take my life, that I may be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

**Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.**

Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use
ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

Take my voice and let me sing
always, only for my King;
take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee.

Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne. *Refrain*

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

"Thank the Lord"

Thank the Lord and sing his praise;
tell ev'ryone what he has done.
Let ev'ryone who seeks the Lord
rejoice and proudly bear his name.
He recalls his promises
and leads his people forth in joy
with shouts of thanksgiving.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

OFFERING PRAYER

P *Creator God,*

C you made everything, and you provide for every need. The bread we break and the wine we pour come from you. As we eat and drink with thanksgiving, fill us with your love; let that love flow through us to others; and join us to the saints before us in a holy and boundless communion; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

***DIALOGUE**

P *The Lord be with you.*

C And also with you.

P *Lift up your hearts.*

C We lift them to the Lord.

P *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna in the highest.**

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P *Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.*

G **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,**

but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen!

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P *Hunger no more. Thirst no more. Come to the banquet of life.*

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.*

G **Amen!**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P *Sovereign God,*

G **in this meal you give us a foretaste of the great feast to come. Keep us faithful to you, that we, with all your saints, may at length celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *The love of God surround you;
the grace of ✠ Christ release you;
and the Holy Spirit be your guide and strength,
now and forevermore.*

G **Amen!**

***SENDING SONG**

“We Are Marching in the Light of God”

ELW 866

**We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.**

**We are marching, (marching, we are marching, marching,)
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching, (marching, we are marching, marching,)
we are marching in the light of God.**

Additional stanzas ad lib:

**We are dancing . . .
We are praying . . .
We are singing . . .**