



The Last Day

Ephesians 6:10-18 Luke 21:5-18; 25-36

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For us as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, this year has certainly taught us one thing: *The Lord is coming soon!* 2020 has been a bizarre year for all of us; and it has disrupted our lives to varying degrees. Everything we see in the world around us is a *Sign of the End*¹!

- ⇒ **The never ending Covid pandemic**
- ⇒ **Anarchy and violence in the streets**
- ⇒ **Wildfires, earthquakes, hurricanes**
- ⇒ **Racial tensions, social unrest and deep dissention among people**
- ⇒ **And if all that was not enough, we have had to suffer through the drama of the “Tiger King” on Netflix! 😊**

Today is the *Last Sunday of the Church Year*, and it is traditionally a time to remember the return of Christ on the Last Day. When you look back over this exceptional year, there are several things that we can learn and be reminded about as we live in these End Times. The *Signs of the End* are everywhere, we are in the Last Days; and Judgment Day is soon coming! Let me highlight a few things ...

First, all these *Signs of the End* are meant to lead you to **Repentance!** Jesus revealed the signs to us so that we would know that Judgment Day is coming and that we would be ready.

¹ Jesus summarized the “signs of the End” for us today in the Gospel lesson from Luke 21:5-18; 25-36.

The only way to be ready for His return on the Last Day is to repent of your sin, confess it to God, and believe that you are forgiven because of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God sent His Son into the world to save you from the destruction that is coming! Jesus faced God's wrath and judgment on the cross for you and in your place. Good Friday was Judgment Day for believers! Jesus was judged, condemned, and punished for your sins on the cross. Through faith in Christ, you will survive death and you will escape the final judgment. On the Last Day, on Judgment Day, you will stand before God and hear the verdict you have been hearing all of your life as a Christian: Your sins are forgiven! You are "not guilty!" You are absolved from your sins! There are no frightening surprises for a believer on the Last Day: Your sins are forgiven because Jesus faced your judgment on the cross! Repentance keeps that always in our minds: as we turn from sin, confess it to God, and believe that we are forgiven!

Whenever you hear about one of the Signs of the End; and the ever-increasing evil in the world, take a minute to make sure your heart is repentant and that you trust only in Christ for your eternal salvation. The Signs of the End are meant to lead you to **Repentance!**

Along with that, a second thing we are reminded of is that Christ is the only hope for the world. Everything is fleeting in this life, there is nothing secure nor stable in this world. Nothing is guaranteed. The Covid virus has shown that to us! It has affected every country; over 1,000,000 have died; and it has disrupted every area of life. There is nothing secure nor stable in this world: there are lies and deception everywhere ... in politics, in the media, on the internet, and even in the Church. We are reminded that we do not put our hope nor our trust in the things of this world: government, politicians, technology, money, science, education, or even our own good works and accomplishments. We put our hope and our trust only in the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything else will burn up and be destroyed on Judgment Day. Our hope and our trust is in Christ alone!

And that is our **message** as conservative Lutheran disciples! *As a congregation*, we preach and teach Christ as *the only hope* of the world! *As individuals*, you bear witness, by your word and with your good works, that Christ is *the only hope* for the world.

The truth is that the world is speeding straight into Judgment Day. Like a car hitting a brick wall, everything will come to screeching halt on the Last Day. Everything will be destroyed by God's wrath, fire, and judgment; the only thing that will survive is Christ and His People; those who trust that He is the Savior of the world. Those who put their hope in Him. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection ensures that you will escape the final judgment. You will be vindicated! You will be given your resurrected body, and you will live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ is *the only hope* of surviving death and escaping the final judgment.

There is an urgency in the work of Christ that we do as a *congregation*; just as there is an urgency in your confession of Christ as an *individual*. Our Gospel message is that Christ is *the only hope* of the world!

When we consider all the *Signs of the End* and the ever-increasing evil in the world around us, a third thing we are reminded of is that we are engaged in a *spiritual struggle* and that the **battle** is with *Satan and his depraved demons*. This spiritual battle will only intensify as we get closer and closer to the End. Your enemy is not those who are consumed with evil intentions; rather they are being influenced — *willingly or unwillingly* — by demonic powers that are ultimately warring against Christ, His Word, and His People. Remember what we heard in Ephesians 6:12:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

The spiritual battle that we see played out in the world around us is just as intense within us. *Satan and his depraved demons* are hard at work to deceive you into great shame and vice. They work hard to lead you astray and convince you to justify sin. They would love for you to drift away from the faith; or to keep Christ at an arm's length. They would love for you to

think that Christianity is a casual thing that you don't have to be too concerned about. *Satan and his depraved demons* would love for you to be distracted by a 1000 other things so that you don't have time for Christ and His Word.

The spiritual warfare that you are in is real and it is intense. *Satan and his depraved demons* know exactly what they are doing.

Your only defense is Christ and His Word. That is why **worship** is so important: Christ and His Word is here to forgive your sins and strengthen your faith. Week after week after week --- all the way through your life -- you are reassured, comforted and strengthened by the forgiveness of your sins in Christ the Lord. In addition, **Bible study** sets your feet on solid ground as you grow as a Biblically Literate and Doctrinally Sound disciple. **Solitude, Prayer and Meditation** gives you time to think about your faith and life according to God's Word. **Memorizing Scripture** fills your mind with God's Word and hides it deep in your heart. **Thankfulness and Contentment** bring joy into your life.

You are engaged in a *spiritual struggle*; and your only defense against *Satan and his depraved demons* is Christ and His Word!

This has been a crazy year for all of us; it's a year filled to the brim with the *Signs of the End*. We all need to learn the lesson of the fig tree. Today we heard Jesus tell us,

“Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the Kingdom of God is near.” Luke 21:29-31

The Fig tree is sprouting.
The Kingdom of God is near.
The *Signs of the End* are everywhere.

We are in the Last Days;
we are living in the End Times;
and Judgment Day is coming soon... *maybe even today*.
Amen!

Lord Jesus, Judge of the Living and the Dead, we thank you for the faith that prepares us for the Last Day, and the confidence of standing before you righteous, holy and forgiven because of your work as Savior of the World. Help us to live faithful lives as we see the *ever-increasing evil* of the world and the plethora of signs of the end. Grant us courage to be lights that shine, offering hope to this condemned world.