

“The Great and Magnificent Works of Christ”

Acts 2:1-21

The people of God, and even many outside of Christ’s Church, have always been interested in the last days and what, why, how, and when this world will end-- especially the “when” part. And throughout history a number of people have been convinced that they are able to predict the will of our Father in heaven. They, of course, have all been wrong.

We saw this in recent weeks. We will see it with the Mayan Calendar predictions of 2012. Do you remember the hysteria as the year 2000 approached and all the crazy predictions? All the world, it seems, is waiting to see if Christ is going to do something – to bring about some tremendous event, on that “magnificent day”, of which Joel speaks, and lead His people to eternal life. But I tell you that the world has not needed to wait around to see Christ doing something tremendous or magnificent. He continues to do His tremendous, magnificent work throughout the world and in our lives today.

We see it in our homes, in our church, in our community. Christ is doing amazing things here and now. I saw Christ doing amazing, magnificent work this week of Vacation Bible School. He is also doing

tremendous work in far away places like Turkey. What an appropriate weekend to have Zach Sommermeyer with us. We celebrate Pentecost: the coming of the Holy Spirit; the day the Christian church was born. The day the Gospel was proclaimed by Peter to sinners of all nations. They believed, were baptized, and came to know Christ. It is through the church that the world gets to see Christ in action. It is in Baptism, the Old Adam is crucified with Christ and eternal life begins. We have been raised to a new life.

Eight weeks before Pentecost, Jesus' work really got going. Certainly He was diligent when it came to preaching, teaching, healing, performing miracles and all those wondrous events during His three year ministry. But the work for which He was born into this world was to suffer and die on the cross as the lamb of sacrifice.

Then after that most gracious offering and even more wonderful victory over death and the grave on Easter morning, Christ lets us know that His work of salvation is finished, but His work in our lives is ongoing. Several weeks ago in our Gospel reading, if you remember, Jesus told His disciples that His miracles and healings were nothing compared to the miracle of the spread of the Gospel and the healing of the multitude of souls through the Word of God and the words of God's people as the Holy Spirit would guide and grow the church.

Then last week, on Ascension Day, we heard Luke's words with which he addressed a man named Theophilus about the work of Jesus

Christ as Luke had written to him in his Gospel and was now writing to him in the book of Acts. He wrote, “In my former book, Theophilus (that is, the Gospel of Luke), I wrote to you about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up to heaven.”

What Jesus did during His years on earth was the beginning of His work. The victory was complete through the cross and the grave. But Christ continues His work through His church. As Martin Luther said, “Christ could have died 1000 times and it would be of no use to us if we had never heard about it.”

In Christ’s continued work in His Church on earth, we see the fulfillment of Joel’s prophesy. Joel had said, “In the last days, God declares, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” Even though Peter was able to preach to those God-fearing Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia...Phrygia and Pamphylia, etc., even though he did seemingly preach to people from all over the known world, this was only the beginning of the work of Christ and His church.

We are living in the last days, just as Peter and all the early Christians were living in the last days. Although it seems as if the last days started a very long time ago, we need to remember that the Lord has always been patient and doesn’t do everything in what we think is a timely manner.

Every generation believes that now is certainly the time when Christ will come. He will come in His time. The work of the church

continues. Every day on which Christ does not return is an opportunity for you to speak of the tremendous, magnificent work Christ has done in your life. You were once a sinner, who did not know Christ, needing to be baptized.

Opportunities abound. Some who need to hear the Word and receive the Holy Spirit are in places like Turkey. Some who do not have the Holy Spirit are here in Quincy. They are our family; they are our friends; they are whomever God has placed in our path. That is your mission field.

God may not do things in the time frame that we would like, but He always does great things. We do not need to wait around for God to act in our lives. God is working in you today. The Holy Spirit has come to you and dwells in you today. Eternal life is not some far off dream. Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, is here today and every day – wherever in the world your path takes you. The Christian Church, born on the Day of Pentecost, is wherever God’s people are gathering around His Word and Sacraments.

He has begun His good work in us, and He will bring it to completion in the day of our Lord. Until that day, we have our mission field. And that day will be great and magnificent because, “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Amen.