

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Martin R. Eden

Pentecost 23
Saturday, November 7, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

“The Day of the Lord is Coming”

Amos 5:18-24

Having celebrated All Saints’ Day last week, we are technically still in the long, green season of Pentecost. However, these final weeks of the church year are sort of a mini season unto themselves. The final Sunday of the church year is in two weeks. From All Saints’ Day until then, we turn our attention to the Day of the Lord, the End Times, the signs that the Last Days are upon us (and this has nothing to do with the current news cycle). Our focus is on Christ’s return, judgment, the closing of the door for those left outside of the kingdom of God, and the resurrection of all flesh and the unspeakable joys of the wedding feast with the Bridegroom of Christ – the feast which has no end for God’s faithful children.

Last week, I spoke of how we live in the “now, but not yet” of our eternal life. We live under God’s grace and protection right now, but not yet have we seen the fullness of what that means – therefore we continually pray “Thy Kingdom come.” However, as we heard today from the prophet Amos, there are many who imagine that they will partake of God’s eternal feast, but for them, the

Day of the Lord will be a dark and painful day from which there is no escape.

Amos says, “Is not the Day of the Lord darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?”

Those are tough words from Amos. But they are no more frightening than Jesus words in our Gospel reading, “Truly I say to you, ‘I do not know you.’” And the door was shut. And there is no opening that door from the outside.

Last week, I spoke of how the completeness of seeing God’s promises fulfilled or the completeness of our prayers being answered (such as “deliver us from evil) cannot be seen by the saints in the church on earth, but only by the saints in the Church Triumphant. God answers you now. You are saved – delivered from evil – right now, even though it doesn’t feel like it. Because not yet do you see a complete doing away of evil. For this we must wait until the Day of the Lord.

Watch! Be prepared! Don’t get frustrated with God because you see evil and chaos all around you in this world. The presence of sin in a sinful world should not surprise us. This does not mean that God is not delivering you from evil right now. Again, as I said last week, if only we could see how much God was protecting us right now from what Satan wanted to do to us right now. It is probably a good idea that we cannot see everything he has aimed our way. Luther said that we would probably die of fright if we knew all that Satan wanted to do to us right now. Modern day horror movies only scratch the surface.

Now, I am not an expert or even a regular viewer of horror films. I have enough darkness in my mind on my own. I don’t enjoy adding to that. However, I

stand by my statement that these movies only scratch the surface of what horror is possible, because the victims in the movies hold onto the hope that there is escape or rescue.

The worst and most horrifying part of the Day of the Lord is when Jesus says, “I do not know you.” And He shuts the door. That is the moment when all hope goes away. I cannot imagine anything more frightening. This is why we cling to our Baptism. He gives us His name. If we bear His name, He could not possibly say, “I do not know you.”

Christians throughout the generations have experienced many horrors. God’s faithful have been persecuted, tortured, crucified, burned at the stake – Nero would douse them in oil and use them as human candles to light up the evening. They were beheaded, fed to lions, and did so holding onto the greatest hope. We are not like others who have no hope. We are not like others, who Paul calls the “uninformed,” who imagine that this life is all that there is – so you better get what you can while you can.

The Day of the Lord is coming. For the uninformed, it will be a day of darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it, because the door will be shut.

The Day of the Lord is coming. For those who have hope, at the moment of the archangel shout, at the moment of the trumpet blast (as we hear Paul tell us), we are going to be with Jesus and will always be with Jesus. The door will never be shut. The justification, the freeing us from our sins and being declared not

guilty, will be complete and eternal. We will have the right to stand blameless before the Lord. We will never be without that joy and comfort again.

Our Lord brings joy and comfort right now. Where would we be without the Gospel? Where would we be if our life was without hope? But that joy and comfort will only be complete in the Day of the Lord. Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ is coming again. And that coming again is what we look forward to.

It is not that we are excited about dying – even though in recent weeks in our Bible class, we saw Luther be very upfront about viewing death as a blessing. He called it “the gain of a blessed death.” And that we should not be so in love with this life. He says this in all seriousness because Jesus has taken the curse of death and made it the tool or vehicle by which the faithful are able to meet our Savior in His resurrected body and join again with the saints celebrating our oneness in Christ, waiting to receive our new resurrected bodies, and taking our place in the life of the world to come.

The Last Day, the Day of the Lord is the first day of the rest of forever. I wish that I could tell you what it is going to be like. I do not have the words. But I do have these words from St. Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians, “And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. . . . Encourage one another with these words.” Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ is coming again! Amen.