

Church of the Epiphany

FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOP

Pentecost 26 • Cloudcroft, New Mexico • November 17, 2024



Pentecost 26, Proper 28

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people, that bringing forth in abundance the fruit of good works, they may be abundantly rewarded when our Savior Jesus Christ comes to restore all things; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings for Pentecost 26

Daniel 12:1-4a
Psalm 16
Hebrews 10:31-39
Mark 13:14-23

Our readings from the Gospel of John end this Sunday. And it is a disturbing ending reading called by some "the little apocalypse." Jesus has spoken about the "abomination of desolation" and after that will come the "tribulation." All this revelation is not good news to the apostles and they may not be hearing it. They are not even prepared for the coming week in Jerusalem. This is not particularly good news to us if it ended there. Thankfully we are comforted by the fact that we know the end of the story that this group of disciples were just beginning to understand.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we have followed our Lord Jesus Christ through this season of Pentecost. Now we are completing this journey and heading into the season of Advent and the joyful arrival of the birth of our Lord Jesus.

We pray and give thanks for the comforting words to us for our salvation. Those words are the saving grace of our worship. We know that you are our God, and your Son Jesus is our Savior.

May our prayers of Thanksgiving in two weeks be an everlasting gift of our love for you.

We pray in that name Jesus.

Amen.

History has widely agreed that apocalyptic literature sought to encourage ancient communities that their actions of recent times had endangered them together into difficult circumstances. It was hoped that by the use of this language and imagery that these words of warning would be enough to shape up the community to change their wayward ways. Then they would take a new stance with God and in response save themselves from destructive conditions. God would

hear their plea and act on their behalf to rectify the situation.

In our thinking today, we tend to make a mistake in this opinion. We tend to see the strange events and to assign fear and be confident that God would then move in the opposite direction. We read today the words of Jesus in Mark 13. Jesus is speaking in the present tense about some events that have already passed in the world of Mark. Then he points to some events that are yet to come. The label for this type of literature is called "prophecy after the fact." The writing here by Mark is to give the congregation the perspectives they need to endure until the apocalypse when they will be gathered into the final and full manifestation of the realm of God.

Our reading in chapter 13 begins with the advice that when the disciples and the people begin to SEE the defiling of God and eventually the destruction of the Temple beginning to fall apart it is time to flee. Jesus says that when that time comes do not hesitate to flee. Don't go back to pack a bag. Don't think about it while you stand on the roof top. Just go down the stairs and take off for the hills. The danger will be so compelling that the person on the rooftop or the worker in the fields should not stop to retrieve a coat. Their lives would depend on their quick response.

When that time comes, people must not hesitate for any reason but must flee directly to the hills. This advice is end-time expectation that God's judgement and God's grace are there for us. Woe to the pregnant mother and woe to all if it is the winter. In this time of overpowering crisis, there might not be any refuge but prayer. Whether the crisis is personal or social, the Christian thing to do is always to turn to prayer.

Verses 19 and 20 give us some reasons for flight. These verses given to us a powerful end-time language. The events to come will be catastrophic and without precedent. Just their magnitude will shake the whole world. To our ears this sounds like hyperbolic language - exaggerated language - language that is not characteristic of time and place. It speaks not only to the significances what is immanent, but also to what is

to come in another time, the final time and the end time, at the end of the age.

In verse 5 through 8 of chapter 13 Jesus has warned the disciples to take heed that no one should deceive them. Because there will be those who will do so claiming to be the Messiah. "Such things must happen but the end is not yet." Jesus goes on to give advice that they must watch out for themselves for they are the ones who will continue to do the work of spreading the gospel.

Jesus then gets to the reading for today and the sign of the coming and the end of the age. The description of the abomination of desolation has in fact already occurred in the past. This is "prophecy after the fact."

Antiochus had in the past already desecrated the Temple by slaughtering a pig on the altar and setting up public brothels in the courtyard. Then he added a statue of Zeus to complete the desolation. The assumption was that if you had a non-functioning Temple in Jerusalem, you cannot have a Jewish presence there. That presence would be in 1948 with the establishment of the State of Israel. Complicating the situation now is the unlikely ability to building a new Temple on the Mount with the Arab presence. The destruction of the Temple in AD 70 was the final prophecy that had occurred.

This is where in the gospel Jesus gives his advice to flee. The next statement is about the "great tribulation." Jesus says that this will be the most awful time in human history. When we consider the calamities, humanity has suffered through, this is a terribly sobering statement. The Book of Revelation describes this terrible time when God pours out his terrible wrath on God's rejecting world.

In 1343 the bubonic plague wiped out over two thirds of the population in Europe in the eight years of its existence 25 million people died.

We live in a cynical age when people are naturally distrustful and pessimistic when it

comes to promises. We witness the election and the fault finding since. Jesus tells us to take heed. He wants us to instead be ready for his return and we can hope that it will be soon. He has given to us a purifying time in our lives. He has given to us the sense of waiting patiently for that return. We can be bold in living of our lives in His love. And it helps us to keep a light touch on the days we have on this world. We need to keep in mind that God Almighty has a reason for this time we are living in that time he has established. We looked desperately for Him in the 1970s. we only need to think that God is present with us now and we may look and discern his presence in our affairs. We cannot fathom the plan that he may have for us but as Christians we believe that it will include us positively. We can take Mark's caution to heart and perhaps be ready to witness the transition of the world when it comes. We can believe that God is present through the Holy Spirit to offer to us the power to endure.

Let us look to the future with the same intensity that we had when first came to Christ. Let us focus on doing God's will in this present age especially when trials rise up to confront us.

Let us look to God's promise for the future and live with enduring faith in God. He will see us through the trials.

Amen.

Pastor Fred



Prayer List - 11/17/24

Resurrection Anglican Fellowship,
Greenwood Village, CO
Fr. Phil Eberhardt

Bishop Steven and. Tricia

Those who need your healing care and strength:

Donya Conine
Wayne Conine Jr.
Frank & Carolyn Wilson
Ellie
Chip & Alyssa Taylor and baby
Julius
Gayla & George Chapman
Ron & Linda Westerfield
Baby, Naomi Jade Dircherl and her
family
Machele Lackey and Susie Sims

Those in the Armed Forces:

Dominick Rankin, US Army, Ft. Bliss, TX
Gabriella Murley, Ft. Bliss, TX
Mason Gregg, Camp Courtney, Okinawa
Creed Napier, US Air Force,
J.W. Grove, US Navy
Nicholas Tran, Joint Base Lewis-
McChord,
Shawn Zima, Hong Kong
Wyatt Green, US Navy

We pray for our Epiphany family:

Eddie and Karli Aguilar, Bill Sorensen
Brian & Kim Chambers, Matthias
Chambers
Murl and Gayle Tullis
Aubrey and Mary Tucker
Cynthia and Steve Vanlandingham

Lessons for Pentecost 26 - Proper 28
November 17, 2024
Anglican Lectionary
year B

Old Testament Reading

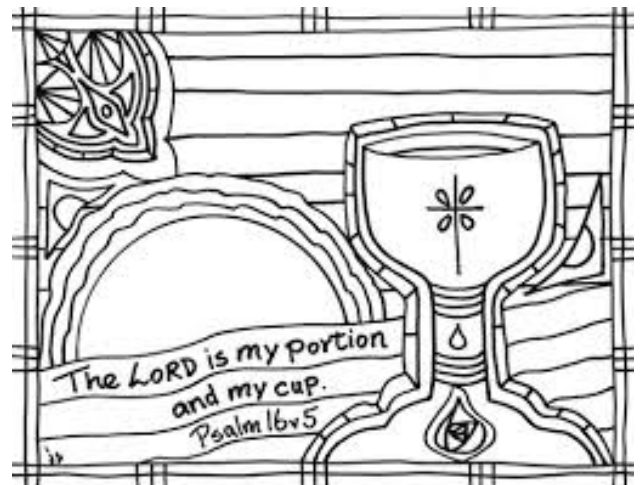
Daniel 12:1-4 a

12 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. **2** And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. **3** And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. **4** But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

Psalms 16

- 1 Preserve me, O God, *
for in you have I put my trust.
- 2 O my soul, you have said unto the LORD, *
"You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."
- 3 All my delight is upon the saints who are on the earth, *
and upon those who excel in virtue.
- 4 But those who run after another god *
shall have great trouble.
- 5 Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, *
neither make mention of their names with my lips.

- 6 The LORD himself is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup;
you shall maintain my lot.
- 7 The boundaries have fallen for me in pleasant places; *
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.
- 8 I will thank the LORD for giving me counsel; *
my heart also chastens me in the night season.
- 9 I have set the LORD always before me; *
he is at my right hand; therefore I shall not fall.
- 10 Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices. *
My flesh also shall rest in hope.
- 11 For you shall not leave my soul in the grave, *
neither shall you allow your Holy One to see corruption.
- 12 You shall show me the path of life; in your presence is the fullness of joy, *
and at your right hand there is pleasure for evermore.



New Testament Reading

Hebrews 10:31-39

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God

32 But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, **33** sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. **34** For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. **35** Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. **36** For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. **37** For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; 38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." **39** But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

The Holy Gospel

Mark 13:14-23

14 "But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. **15** Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, **16** and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. **17** And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! **18** Pray that it may not happen in winter. **19** For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. **20** And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.

21 And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. **22** For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. **23** But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.



Hebrews 10:39

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.