

The 1st Sunday in Advent

November 28, 2021

The Lessons: Jeremiah 33:14-16
 Psalm 25:1-10
 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
 Luke 19:28-40

The Hymns: # 339 *Lift Up Your Heads, You Everlasting Doors*
 # 332 (1-3, 8) *Savior of the Nations, Come*
 # 336 *Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending*

The Collect: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Sermon:

Title: "Important Days"

Text: Jeremiah 33:14-16

Our Sermon Text for this morning is from the Old Testament Reading, Jeremiah 33.

"In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'" Amen.

Brothers and sisters,

Do you have a favorite day that you remember or celebrate? Perhaps, as you look back in your life, you might have some days that you remember: birthdays, anniversaries, even those days that didn't seem to have happy endings.

This morning, our Old Testament reading speaks of "those days" – those days which are

very important in history – usually we think those days were way in the past... But our text states, for Jeremiah and the people “those days” were still to come.

Yet, for you and for me, those days have already come; as a result, we all come from different parts of the world (countries, provinces, or cities) to celebrate those days here at Redeemer. Those days have already come with the first advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. He came to suffer and die for your sins (and for my sins). Those days are the days when our Lord Jesus Christ rose and ascended to God the Father.

Those days are very important for you and for me, because Jesus, in those days, gave us meaning and hope – our Salvation.

When we read the writings of the prophet Jeremiah, we see that not all people accepted his message – the message which God gave him to speak to the Israelites. Perhaps, like us, they were fixated in the here-and-now. Like us, they were more concerned about “these days” as supposed to “those days.” Our minds are filled with: “I need to do this,” “I need to do that,” in these days. “I have bills, mortgage, exams, etc. I need a quick fix these days... why wait for those days.”

The people in Jeremiah’s time turned to the false prophets and false gods – hoping that the gods would fix their present problems. Likewise, in today’s world, we are surrounded with false prophets (some Tele-Evangelists, Radio hosts, etc.) and false gods (the self-help books - encouraging and motivating us to rely on our selves, rather than relying on God, material things, overeating, over drinking, etc.). Don’t we also look for these gods who promise that they can fix our problems instantly?

Meanwhile, God kept sending true prophets to guide them in the right direction; and to keep hope in His promises for those days – the coming days of the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ – the Messiah. But the people kept ignoring the prophets’ messages. And God let their enemies – the Babylonians – destroy Jerusalem. Furthermore, most of the people were taken away to

exile. It is a sad story, but true!

Yet God is faithful in keeping and fulfilling His promises for those days. So, as we read Jeremiah's writings, despite the struggle that they had to go through, some of the people kept hoping in God's promises. Yes, the present days were hard for them. But instead of focusing on the present hardship and relying on the false gods, the faithful set their hearts and minds on the days which are coming.

As Jeremiah prophesied about those coming days, God made a new branch sprout from the line of David, Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And we see this in our today's Gospel reading: "Jesus was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of His disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

As Jeremiah prophesied of those days, Jesus came to Judah and Jerusalem to fulfill God's promises... to restore the relationship between God and His people... to defeat their enemies... and to give them eternal safety, security, and joy.

Brothers and sisters, in our reflection of this First Sunday in Advent, let us remember that God is the source of our help and comfort through His Son Jesus Christ – His life and work. His incarnation at Bethlehem and His suffering, death and resurrection in Jerusalem.

Our liturgy, Bible readings, and hymns help us draw our attention to the most important days: The days of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

We proclaim His amazing love, which He demonstrated on the cross, until He comes again. We eat the bread, which is His body – and drink the wine, which is His blood in remembrance of

Him and for the forgiveness for our sins. On this First Sunday in Advent, let us remember our Holy Baptism, which is one of the miraculous means of grace through which God creates the gift of faith in our hearts.

As we confess in the Apostle's Creed, our Lord Jesus Christ "will come again to judge the living and the dead." Yes, Christ will come once at the end of time, on that day. On that day, He will come not to "rapture" believers away from earth, nor to establish an earthly kingdom, nor to begin a thousand-year reign on earth, but to separate the believers from the unbelievers and to give each of them their eternal reward or punishment.

St. Matthew in his 25th chapter, verses 32-33 tells us:

"Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left."

But you and I are not worried about His second coming. Because of His saving work for us, when Jesus comes again, He will give us eternal life. Indeed, as our text indicates, the Lord Jesus Christ is Our Righteousness...which means we don't rely on our righteousness. That is why while we reflect on those days in history – the work and life of Jesus – we look forward with joy to that day – His second coming.

Yes, on that day, all our troubles and trials will come to an end. St. Matthew, again in his 25th Chapter verse 46, declares, "On the Last Day, those who trust in Christ and His forgiveness, life, and salvation will go "into eternal life" Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.