

Lessons for Twenty-Sixth Sunday After Pentecost November 17, 2024

Psalm 16 ~ *The psalmist asks God's protection and expresses confidence in God's faithfulness.*

Daniel 12:1-3 ~ *In the end, God's people will rise from death to eternal life, but others to eternal shame.*

Hebrews 10:11-25 ~ *Jesus' single sacrifice for our sins has removed our guilt for all time.*

Mark 13:1-13 ~ *The marvels of culture will not prevent distress, but God's word will preserve His people.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Faith Shaking Tremors

Great distress and cruel persecution are enough to shake our faith. When Daniel saw the turmoil among the nations, he rejoiced that those who trust in God will rise to eternal life. The persecuted Christians in Rome were reassured that even the distress of this world cannot shake the eternal victory Jesus has won for us by His single sacrifice. Jesus warned the disciples that the massive temple structure would be torn down but even the tribulations of the last days would not shatter the ones who put their trust in God's gracious promises.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: O Lord, I am so prone to waver and can be so easily distracted from Your truth. Grant me a constant faith and firm trust in Your promise that in Jesus Christ You have assured my victory over all the adversities of this world and an eternal place with You in glory. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: The marvels of this world will not endure the trials of time, but God in His grace has preserved His people through the single sacrifice of His Son on Calvary. When we invest our goods in that message of Life, we help others stand firm in faith until the end.

OFFERING PRAYER: O Lord, when timber, stone, and mortar crash
And all the structures of this world are falling,
Let us rejoice that we have placed this cash
Where You will use it in Your Kingdom's calling.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: Just like the disciples, we can easily get caught up in the magnificent technology of our day and can become distressed when it fails or no longer impresses. When the structures of civilization are not able to calm the turmoil of nations and bring peace, but instead inflame jealousy and strife, we may forget that these are only created orders. When crises and conflict shatter our lives, we need to remember the only thing that cannot be shaken is the glory of heaven. We can rest safely in God's promise that through the One who sacrificed Himself for us, our names are in the book of life and we shall rise to eternal life. This promise is the content of our witness before rulers and kings, and gives the only assurance of enduring through the perils of this world.

Questions to Consider: How firm is the foundation of your faith?

- Can you imagine "distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations?"
- How can you know your way to God has been opened?
- What atrocities will even some believers commit, when persecuted for their faith?
- When rulers and kings try to establish peace with power, what must our witness be?

Bonus: Page 2, Hymn: When Our Voices of Dissension

When our Voices of Dissension

Genesis 11:1-9

When our voices of dissension strike a selfish, strident chord;
when our monuments to glory take a toll we can't afford,
only You, Lord, can restore us by the sacrifice You made.
With one voice we preach the message that our ransom has been paid!

When the bricks begin to tumble from the turrets that we build,
grant us grace to use our treasures for the purposes You willed.
To Your service, Lord, recall us, in obedience to Your word;
make us witnesses who share the gracious peace that we have heard.

Holy Spirit, ever loving, calling many to be one,
fill our hearts with trust and mercy; keep us faithful to the Son.
Give us strength to face life's trials. Bring us comfort in our grief.
You have turned our hearts to Jesus; now in Him we have relief.

– Gilbert A. Franke, 7/9//2014

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