

**BULLETIN TEMPLATE: Minnesota Valley Church
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
Date: Sunday, November 26, 2023
Church Year Date: Christ the King**

Prelude: Rebekah Olson

Hymn #154 "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun"

Confession of Sin: *Psalm 51:1-12: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin...10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

Hymn #159 "Christ Returneth"

Children's Message

Reader: Joel Carrizales

Epistle Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 25:1-13 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. 6 "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' 7 "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' 9 "'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' 10 "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. 11 "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' 12 "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' 13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: *Apostles' Creed- I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen*

Gloria Patri: *Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen)
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen,*

Announcements, Offertory Prayer

Praise and Worship Songs: PICKED AND SUNG BY HANNAH

“WHAT HAPPENS WHEN JESUS COMES BACK?”
Isaiah 65:17-25; Pastor Tom Olson; November 26, 2023

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

70's: The 1970's were filled with songs, books and movies about the second coming of Christ. Bill Gaither wrote: *“The King is Coming, the King is Coming, Praise God, He's coming for me.”* Larry Norman wrote *“I wish we'd all been ready...there's no time to change your mind, the Son has come and you've been left behind.”* That song really got me thinking. One of the lines from a teen-age youth group song we sang, says, *“tell me, how it's gonna be, read it from the Bible again. ‘Cuz I can't wait to see Jesus. ‘Cuz Jesus is coming again...”* And people meant it. There was a great longing for Jesus to come back at that time and we wanted to meet Jesus.

PROPHECY: On this last Sunday of the Church Year...Christ the King Sunday...our Scripture lessons tell us how it is going to be when Jesus comes again. This text from Isaiah 65 get's very specific and I personally take it as literally as the prophecies that say He would be born of a virgin in Bethlehem! When I read these prophecies, I get so excited that I personally get anxious for Jesus to return... “WHAT HAPPENS WHEN JESUS COMES BACK?”

I. HEALING OF THE MIND

Isaiah 65:17 "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

FORGETTING: One of the greatest gifts of the coming kingdom is that we will be able to forget the pain of this world. There will be no memory of wars, death, disease, arguments, disappointments or failures. We use the term “baggage” for all the painful, broken, hurtful memories we have. We will leave all of the “baggage”

behind. In *Revelation 21:5* we read: *He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"*

GONE: Mental illness, panic attacks, depression, anxiety and stress will be gone. I have always dreamed of going to the south Pacific or Caribbean and sitting or lying on a deserted white sand beach with a beautiful blue ocean, warm air and a gentle breeze for days on end until I totally unwind and relax and let go of my cares. But I know that is not probable in this life. But I trust that a heaven ordained forgetfulness will one day allow it to happen and I will for the first time feel totally relaxed and unencumbered.

NOW: Romans 12:1 says that God's Word transforms us by *“the renewing of our minds”* right now in this life but it won't be in complete fulness and perfection until Jesus comes back and allows us to forget the former things. Will there be any memories in heaven? We will know when we get there. But I suspect the new journey we are on will be so compelling that we would not even want to waste our time remembering, even if we could. We will truly learn, for the first time perhaps, to live fully in the moment. ...when Jesus comes back...

II. WEeping WILL DISAPPEAR

Isaiah 65:18-19 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. 19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

REMOVED: The Word of God makes it clear that weeping will not be a part of Christ's kingdom. *Revelation 21:4 God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

RETAINED: Notice here what God doesn't take away: gladness, rejoicing, delight and joy! Those are the things that we get to keep in the coming kingdom.

Psalms 30:4-5 Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name. 5 For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

DISAPPOINTMENTS: We all face disappointments in life. Some folks face extremely large disappointments, greater than anything I have had to face. But be of good cheer. Our sadness and tears will be transformed into unspeakable joy when Jesus comes back for us at death or at his second coming. ...when Jesus comes back...

III. PEOPLE WILL LIVE AS LONG AS OLIVE TREES

Isaiah 65:20-22 "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. 21 They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands.

REALIZATION: I am at the point in my life that I know I will never be able to do many things I had hoped to do in life. But there is no need to fret. The prophecy here says that in the coming kingdom that if you die at 100 you will be considered but a child. I imagine people will live as old as Methuselah during those first 1,000 years...and after that there will be no more death at all. I am confident that everyone will have their complete fill of all this earth has to offer before God makes the new heaven and the new earth. We will be like Abraham, "***satisfied with life***" and ready to move on to the next step in God's plan of the ages.

MILLENNIUM: I feel that this passage is a reference to the 1,000-year millennial kingdom. Nothing else makes sense to me because it is so specific about the people growing as old as the trees and we know that the Olive Tree of the Holy Land can grow to be thousands of years old. Many trees can grow to be hundreds of years old. Alaska red cedar can live up to 3,500 years. Giant sequoias can last over 3,000 years and at least one Bristlecone pine (alive today) is estimated to be almost 5,000 years old.

Those already in resurrection bodies will live forever without death. ...WHEN JESUS COMES BACK...

IV. PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED QUICKLY

Isaiah 65:23-24 They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. 24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

BLESSING: When Jesus comes back there will be no misfortune. The blessing of God will be thick upon the earth. There will be a communication with our heavenly Father, perhaps directly from our heart to His heart. Before we have a need, God will be answering as we pray.

AIRPLANE: It kind of reminds me of the time I was serving in Alaska and I needed an airplane. I got up early and sat in the parsonage living room having devotions. I asked God for a small plane. Literally as I was praying the phone rang and it was Pastor Paul Nash. He asked this question, "Tom, would you like to have a small plane?" My answer came as I asked! That is the most dramatic answer to prayer I have had in my life. But when Christ returns, that will be the normal answer to prayer! WHEN JESUS RETURNS:

V. ALL ANIMALS WILL BE TAME

Isaiah 65:25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

VEGETARIANS: According to this verse, the carnivorous animals will become vegetarians. I suspect that this is the way God intended it in the Garden of Eden before the fall. It is my understanding that even people did not eat meat until after the flood of Noah. For those of us who are meat lovers, this sounds disappointing. But I am confident that our tastes will change in that day and that all people and animals will be happy to eat fruits and vegetables as Adam and Eve did in the Garden. I suspect that the blessed fruits will be so delicious and satisfying that we will forget the taste of animal meat.

SUMMARY: I don't begin to claim to understand this passage about the earthly kingdom age. And I certainly don't even begin to understand much about the new heavens and the new earth that God will usher in. But I do know that the thought of it can transform your life and motivate godly living.

Peter describes it in this way in *2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

Perfect provision, safety, security and joy will be ours when Jesus returns to earth.

- OUR MINDS WILL BE HEALED
- WEEPING WILL DISAPPEAR
- PEOPLE WILL LIVE AS LONGS AS TREES
- PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED QUICKLY
- ALL ANIMALS WILL BE TAME

COME: I think that in light of the current wars and troubles in this world, this description of what is coming makes me want to repeat the greeting that first century Christians used. They would say, "MARANATHA" which means "OUR LORD, COME." "...tell me, how it's gonna be. Read it from the Bible again. 'Cuz I can't wait to see Jesus, because Jesus is Coming again...Oh yah, Jesus is coming again."

May the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

Hymn #157 "Rejoice the Lord is King"

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Doxology (AH #390) *Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men. A-men. A---men.*

Postlude: Rebekah Olson