

NORTH MAIN STREET SERMON NOVEMBER 17, 2024

26Th Sunday after Pentecost

HEBREWS 10: 11-14 AND HEBREWS 10: 19-25 and GOSPEL MARK 13: 1-8 SERMON

Hebrews 10:11-14

¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Hebrews 10:19-25

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Mark 13:1-8 - Gospel Reading

The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times

13 As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”

² “Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”⁵ Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁸ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom..

The word of God...

We seem to be following a pattern of larger and more spectacular being better. The massive stones of the temples seem Magnificent to the disciples. And then there is small apocalypse. this is a disaster : a sudden and very bad event that causes much fear, loss, or destruction. And Jesus warns them about this There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains..

The letter to the Hebrews teaches the importance of Jesus Christ. Not the importance of power and who is better. It does not relate to the apocalypse that may happen ... The letter simply explains how Jesus is the Savior of the world. Christ fulfilled God’s law by willingly offering himself as the perfect sacrifice on the cross so that sins would be forgiven. Maybe that

was just a Small Apocalypse but even as a small one..it changed the world.. Hebrews encourages Christians to live by faith. Chapter 11 describes people through whom God did amazing things by the gift of faith. Hebrews includes the verse: “Therefore, let us go on toward perfection”.

Our verse for today is Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 23: “Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for [God] who has promised is faithful.” Let’s think about what this means.

A faithful person is dependable, someone you can count on. God fulfills His promises. Therefore we can have Faith in Him.

A faithful friend is loyal. In our relationship with God, God sticks with us. That’s why we can “hold fast.” God helps us hold on tight to “the confession of our hope.”

When we say, “I am a Christian,” we tell, or confess, that our hope is in Jesus Christ. He is the source of our hope for life, now and forever. Jesus helps us hold our faith “without wavering.” We don’t, go back and forth. We don’t need to doubt because we are sure of God’s goodness.

As the perfect high-priest, Christ has offered a complete and final sacrifice. He now sits enthroned at the right hand of God. Because of his work, Christians are being made holy and therefore are able to enter the presence of the Almighty God. As believers, we now have confidence to draw near to God and **Christ Gives Us the Confidence we need to Draw Near to God.**

We have confidence to draw near to God’s presence. Separating the Holy of Holies from the common people was a huge veil. Humans belonged on one side and God on the other. Only the high priest could go in, and only then on the day of Atonement.

Christ has provided a “new and living way” to enter into the presence of God.

. Christ Gives Confidence to Hold Fast to Our Hope

The ultimate hope of the Christian is contained in two simple statements. First, Christ arose from the grave. Second, Christ is coming again. These two words of affirmation and faith comprise our hope. They are in the Affirmation of Faith that we said today. The book of Hebrews reminds us to hold fast to our hope. We must never lose our grip on what we believe.

Christ also Gives us Confidence to Invest in Others

As believers, we are to consider how we can constructively spur others on to Christian growth and maturity. We are to take up the ministry of encouragement. Through our faith, others should learn love and the doing of good works..True disciples of Christ are called to make investments in the lives of people..not just some people, but everyone we meet. This is simple to do if we just have faith to do it. Here’s a story that is simple and about faith..

When the automobile first appeared on the scene, thousands of Americans joyfully bought them. It did not take long for the joy to wear thin as many motorists found their cars bogging down along the roadways. The paths made by horses and buggies had too many ruts and puddles for cars to move about freely. To bring back the joy, Henry Ford started an ambitious campaign to introduce street paving to America. He assembled teams and provided them with equipment to begin paving “seed miles” across the nation. From town to town, these crews would pave a one-mile stretch of smooth road. When motorists first drove on the smooth surface, the exhilaration proved great and soon miles and miles of roadway appeared as the joy of driving gripped the country. Small investments can bring great rewards,

especially those that are eternal in nature. In Christ, we can make a difference in others by spurring them to abundant life and good deeds. If we can only do a small thing like one mile of smooth road, for God that's us working in faith..

In our Gospel reading from MARK 13:1-8

Americans who remember the beginnings of the space age will recall the excitement—and apprehension—about the nation's first orbital flight. Regular classes were forgotten as the children at schools gathered in front of a black-and-white television to watch the rocket launch. Would John Glenn really circle the earth and return safely? Could such a thing be done? We didn't know, but we kept our eyes on the screen and listened eagerly for each progress report. Our teachers assured us we were watching history in the making, and they were right even though many back then thought that technically television may be feasible, but commercially and financially it is an impossibility."

Suspense, impossible things, timing, and reminders from a Teacher are part of the scene from today's Gospel reading. Jesus had left the temple for the final time and had taken his disciples to the Mount of Olives, higher than the temple mount, where they could see the entire city. The odd remark by one disciple, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" was met with an even stranger prophetic utterance from Jesus: "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down." This interchange serves as introduction to the only long discourse in Mark's Gospel, often called "The Little Apocalypse. To the disciples. Nothing could bring down these walls. "Look, teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" they said to Jesus. The smallest stones in the structure weighed 2 to 3 tons. Many of them weighed 50 tons. The largest existing stone, part

of the Wailing Wall, is 12 meters in length and 3 meters high, and it weighs hundreds of tons! The stones were so immense that neither mortar nor any other binding material was used between the stones. Their stability was attained by the great weight of the stones. The walls towered over Jerusalem, over 400 feet in one area. Inside the four walls was 45 acres of bedrock mountain shaved flat and during Jesus' day a quarter of a million people could fit comfortably within the structure. No sports structure in America today comes close. You can then understand the disciples' surprise..

.” Verses 1-8 are part of an entire chapter dealing with signs of the end of the age. It is appropriate, therefore, to look at these verses in their context. and how do they address the contemporary church?

I. The End of the Age Will Come

The phrase “second coming” does not appear in this chapter, though the revelation or appearance of the Christ is a theme. The destruction of the temple (which burned in A.D. 70), famines, earthquakes, wars and rumors of wars, are not signs of the end, but “birth pangs”—signs preceding the end and confirming Jesus prophecy.

The church for centuries has declared its belief in reciting this line of the Apostles Creed: “from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.” Ever since this conversation with Peter, James, John, and Andrew, followers of Jesus have believed the Savior will come again.

II. No One Knows When This Will Happen

The first question the disciples asked the Master was, “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?” It is a question followers of the Messiah still ask. Throughout history and even today, self-

appointed prophets have made a cottage industry of predicting when the end of the world will come. The Cold War, the Gulf War, and other events have all been accompanied by literature identifying current events with names and symbols. But Christ said to the disciples, “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father”). So, therefore we should be skeptical of anyone who claims to have inside information, for this contradicts the testimony of the Gospels.

Jesus instructions were to take heed and watch, for we do not know when the time will come. For disciples of any age, this means striving to grow in the knowledge and love of God, witnessing and serving in Jesus name, and trusting the Lord’s faithfulness. It also means resisting “false Messiahs” and the temptation to second-guess God’s timetable. Finally, it means looking forward expectantly to the future. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. The little apocalypse happened over 2000 years ago and because of that we can have faith in our future. Just don’t second guess what Jesus is telling us.. and don’t put your faith in things just because they are big and large...Because we believe that God is like Christ, we can dare to live in faith and hope and love now; trusting God for whatever the future holds, because we believe that God holds the future, and that God’s Name and God’s Nature are love.. . Amen.”