

SERMON FOR NOVEMBER 29, 2020

TEXT: MARK 13: 24-37

THEME: D DAY

24 “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, **25** and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. **26** And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. **27** And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. **28** “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. **29** So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. **30** Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. **31** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. **32** “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **33** Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. **34** It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. **35** Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— **36** lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. **37** And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

In the name of Jesus:

Operation Neptune was a year in the making, the largest seaborne invasion in military history. The planning for the operation began a year earlier, it had to be meticulous, taking into account the phase of the moon, the tides of the ocean, and the time of day that the invasion would need to take place. Leading up to the invasion, the military had to conduct a concerted

effort to deceive the enemy, this was codenamed Operation Bodyguard. The day for the invasion was set, but due to bad weather, the invasion was actually delayed 24 hours. The next day, they had to invade, there was no turning back, for further postponement would mean that the invasion would have to be delayed another two weeks. No, they had to go, and go they did, so on June 6, 1944, D Day arrived, the day when allied forces invaded Normandy to free Western Europe from Nazi domination.

Since then D day has come to refer to a day of important significance, a day when something of extreme importance will happen.

There is a D Day of sorts on the horizon. Our culture recognizes that day. On newscasts, in newspapers, you will soon see the number of shopping days left until Christmas. Christmas Day, December 25, is D Day, and for shoppers, you only now have 26 shopping days until Christmas. You can put off the shopping, you can hold off on Christmas preparations, but sooner or later Christmas will arrive and the shopping will have ended. You need to get your shopping done before Christmas Day.

Here we are in the season of Advent and as Christians our focus turns to the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Advent is a season of preparation, for the birth of our Savior, but also a time of preparation for when Jesus comes again in His glory. The past few weeks the Gospel lessons

have spoken of the End Times. Like a crescendo building to its climax, today's Gospel lesson speaks to when Jesus comes again.

There is no room for complacency. No time for putting things off. D Day is approaching, the times that we are living in are quickly coming to a close. The end is set. The time has been established. No man knows or can know the day or hour when Jesus returns. People may sleep in late, others may sleep through life, some may even sleep through the sermon, but there comes a day, the Day, D Day, when the Lord will return. The Day and Hour is already scheduled. The Lord has predetermined that the world will come to an end.

But we hear this message every year, says the cynic. The world continues to offer despair: an ongoing Pandemic, death, anxiety, and fear. We grow impatient waiting for the Lord to return. Our impatience morphs into complacency. We wait and wonder. Maybe the Lord isn't going to come at all? What IS He waiting for?

But the Lord questions us: What are YOU waiting for? The Lord is coming, and soon, so are we living in expectation for His coming? If the Lord is returning, and let there be no doubt, the Scripture is clear, He is returning, the question for us is how then do we prepare for this Day of our Lord's Second Coming?

God calls us to be alert. Even though we don't know the Day or Hour, we know that that Day and Hour is approaching. Just as Jesus said to His disciples in the Garden: "Stay awake and watch," so He tells us to stay awake and watch for His return. To focus each and everyday upon Jesus.

It sounds easy but it isn't. All too often we react like Peter, James and John in the Garden, where they were awakened from their slumber by their Lord asking the question: "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?"

Our comfort is not in our effort to stay awake and focus on Jesus, because to be quite honest, we fail miserably in our efforts to focus and live for Jesus. We become anxious over what we don't know, afraid of what we can't control, desperate for what we think we need, and despondent over our sinfulness. Our hope, though, is in the name of the Lord!

His Good News for you is that He never slumbers nor sleeps. He is constantly watching over you. He has your name written in the palm of His hand. He has prepared you for the Day of His Coming in that He has come for you! God sent His Son Jesus in love for you. God determined to save you in Jesus. And Jesus accomplished your salvation on God's D Day.

At the right time in history, God became man in the Person of Jesus. He lived His life focused on your salvation. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, He despised the shame. On His D Day, Jesus took battle

Satan on the cross. There Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for you. On His D Day, the Day we call Good Friday, He was crucified for you, for me, and for every human being. And He declared victory over sin, Satan, and death when He rose from the grave, never to die again.

God gives you the certainty for eternity. He has called you by name in the waters of Holy Baptism. You aren't a number or a nameless face, Jesus knows you. You belong to Him. He has purchased and won you from sin, Satan, and death, not with silver or gold but with His holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death so that you can live in joyful expectation of His coming.

He is coming for you. And He comes to you today. And you will receive Him not only in faith, but in a very real and physical way. He comes to you in, with and under the bread and wine to forgive you. To strengthen you for the task ahead. He gives you His Spirit not to condemn you but to bless you, so that you might be a blessing to others in how you live.

The Scriptures say that now is the Day of salvation. Now is the time to believe, now is the time to repent, now is the time to prepare for the Lord's coming again. So don't be caught unawares. Don't fall asleep. He will come like a thief in the night. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Use this Advent season to focus on Jesus. Repent and continue to believe in Jesus.

Live your life as one of ongoing repentance. Not only prepare for Christmas, prepare for His Second Coming.

Yes, our D Day is coming. The Day is coming, when Jesus will come again. Let there be no doubt, Christ has come for you, He comes to you today, and He will come again on the Last Day. So prepare for the Coming of the Lord.

Amen