

SERMON FOR NOVEMBER 14, 2021

TEXT: DANIEL 12: 1-3; HEBREWS 10:11-25; MARK 13:1-13

THEME: IT'S ALL COMING TO AN END

In the name of Jesus:

As many of you know, I am a big sports fan. I have been known to stay up late to watch my favorite team. But as I grow older, the games seemingly start later and the length of the games get longer, and I no longer will stay up late to see my favorite team play. The end of the game goes way past my bedtime.

So what do I do? I either record the game to watch the ending, or will wake up and look up the score of the game in the morning. If I know that my team has won, I will probably watch the game and fast forward to the good parts, and if they have lost, I will just erase the recording. In one sense it is a great feeling to know the ending when my team wins, because no matter what happens during the game, during the high points and low points, I know how the game will end. The stressful parts of the game aren't so stressful when you know the ending.

Over these next two Sundays we will celebrate the end of the church year. We will focus on the end, the end times, and how we are called to live our lives as believers of our Lord Jesus Christ. All too often we become too

preoccupied and immersed in the matters and affairs of this world and life that we forget the big picture, and we lose sight that the life that we are presently living and the world that we live in will eventually come to an end.

It should not shock us that the world will come to an end. We see signs of it all around us. Especially this time of year. Last weekend we turned our clocks back an hour. We are losing more daylight by the minute and the darkness of winter is setting in. Look around and you will see that the very creation itself is if not dying is falling into hibernation. Animals are gathering food for the winter, the once green leaves turning color, falling off and dying. The growing season is over, farmers are harvesting their crops. This weekend the temperatures are falling, the hint of snow is in the air. This is not a new occurrence. It takes place each and every year, as fall turns into winter. And so we hunker down, hoping for a quick winter so that we can get back to seeing signs of life and vitality all around us in the spring and summer months.

All things must come to an end. And this is what Jesus is telling His disciples in our Gospel lesson for today. Many mistake this passage as referring to the end of the world. It isn't talking about the end of the world, but rather the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

As the disciples were walking out of the Temple in Jerusalem, Jesus predicted its ultimate destruction. The Temple was the most important

building in all of Israel, the place where God came to be with His people.

Imagine a building in America that would combine the prestige and importance of our Capital Building, the White House, the Supreme Court, the Pentagon, and all of the churches in our land, that was the importance of the Temple in the life of the Israelite. To speak against the Temple was considered a grave offense by the rulers of the day. People thought that the Temple would last forever. To think of its destruction, well, it would make a citizen back then experience the same emotions that you had during the terror attacks of 9/11. You hopefully get the idea that the Temple as a structure and institution was a pretty big deal. And it was!

Yet Jesus looks back at the Temple and says, “ Do you see all of these great buildings? Not one stone will be left on another.” Whoa! In the disciples mind, the Temple was indestructible, it would never come to an end. In fact, they marveled and said to Jesus, “ Look Master at all of these large stones!” The smallest stone of the Temple weighed 2 to 3 tons. Many weighed 50 tons. The largest existing stone, part of the remaining Wailing Wall, is almost 40 feet in length and 10 feet tall, weighing hundreds of tons! These stones are so massive that there is not any other binding material or mortar used between the stones. The stability of the building was due to the great weight of the stones. The walls of the Temple at one point towered 400 feet

and within the structure it could hold a quarter of a million people! Think of something larger and grander than any sports facility, bigger than the Horseshoe at OSU. A great, massive, beautiful building, that was the Temple.

Yet all of this was destroyed, in 70 AD, by the Romans. And this destruction, along with the violence and mayhem that followed, is recorded in the Gospel lesson for today. Not even this great structure, the Temple, would stand until the end. Why? Because of the sinfulness of the people.

God had repeatedly said to the people of Israel, “I will be your God and you will be My people.” But they rejected God and His love, His goodness, His grace and all of His gifts. No wicked deed will go unpunished. The wages of sin is death. Even the mighty House of God would be destroyed because of the sinfulness and rejection of God by His people.

So what does this mean for you and me today? Certainly you and I will meet our end. Our lives, like the world we live in, will come to an end. The simple reason is that we are fallen creatures, as Adam and Eve sinned and fell from grace, so too you and I have sinned and fall short of God’s holiness. We haven’t loved God as we should, and we have failed to treat others and love others as God would have us to. Witness the arguments within families, the hatred shown to others, so many people today remarking, “how can people be

so mean?” It’s because of sin. Sin destroyed our relationship with God, it destroys relationships between others today, sin pays off with death.

But God’s answer to sin is found in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, the priest daily offered sacrifice for sin. But Jesus is God’s great High Priest, He offered Himself on the cross for the all time once and for all single sacrifice for sin. Jesus is the New Temple of God, true God and true Man, offered as the perfect sacrifice for all sin.

The blessings of Jesus’ sacrifice are given to you in your Baptism, in the proclaimed Word, and in the Supper. God uses His Word, His living and active Word, His spoken Word and visible Word (the Sacraments) to give you faith in Jesus and to keep you believing in Jesus. This is what the Epistle means today when it says: “This is the covenant that I will make with them, putting my law on their hearts and writing them on their minds, remembering their sins and their lawless deeds no more, so that you can come to God the Father with a true heart, full of faith, with the certainty that your sins are forgiven, that you have a good and clean conscience knowing for certain that God loves you, that He is for you, that He loves you, and that you can live your life for Jesus, encouraging others to not only keep the faith but to come to faith and believe in the Son of God who is their loving Savior.

God tells us that even though our life on this earth will end, it is not the end but only the beginning. We will forever be in God's presence for Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Even as Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father, He will come again to judge the living and the dead. There will be a resurrection of all the dead. Just as Daniel foretold in our Old Testament lesson for today: " But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. **2** And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. **3** And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." Yes, the end will come, and we will be raised to a new life, an eternal life with the Father, a physical life in the flesh, raised from the grave to be like Jesus, to live a life free from sin, the power of Satan and the fear of death.

Oliver Messiaen composed a musical piece called: "The Quartet for the End of Time." He wrote it for those who were prisoners of war during WWII to remind them that no matter how horrible their circumstances looked, at the end of time, in the end God would win out over the forces of evil and that He redeem humanity from its brokenness and suffering.

Jesus promised that in this world that there will be suffering until the end of time. But you don't have to live in fear and anxiety, for Jesus has not only your present in His hands but also your future and eternal destiny. So you can live in confidence, knowing that nothing will ever separate you from His love, and on that Last Day He will give to you the crown of everlasting life. For He who has promised this is faithful. And He continues to hold you in the palm of His hand.

Amen