**Notes for Next Sunday**

First Sunday in Advent

Advent is a season of confession and repentance. It allows the Christians to see their own sin-filled darkness, confess its sin, and receive the Lord’s forgiveness. Advent is also a season when Christians are mindful of when Jesus will come again and prepare their hearts for that joyous event.

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

There is a general sense of vigilance called for in our readings. Our readings suggest that when we are attentive to God’s Word we will be ready for anything that will come into our lives.

Old Testament (Jeremiah 33:14-16). In these verses Jeremiah is prophesying the birth of Jesus. This is the fulfillment of the promise made in the Garden of Eden after the Fall of Man. Jesus will be from King David’s family tree. Jesus is called: “The Lord Our Righteousness.” He brings His righteousness and makes us right in the sight of God by His life, death and resurrection.

Epistle (1 Thessalonians 3:9-13). Paul begins by giving thanks to God for all the joy he and his co-workers have because of the Thessalonian Christians. Paul also reminds the Thessalonians that he is praying for them and then goes on to list some things he desires for them.

Gospel (Luke 21:25-36). In this text Jesus is urging a watchful attitude. It is His second coming that He wants to His followers to be ready. There will plenty of signs pointing to Judgment Day. He does not want us to miss them. There needs to a prayerful watchfulness on the part of Jesus’ followers.

*For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.*

Old Testament – Jeremiah 33:14-16

**14﻿ ”‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. ﻿15﻿ ”‘In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. ﻿16﻿ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it﻿ will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.’**

As in previous revelations of God’s eternal plan for mankind, Jeremiah’s vision of good things to come is not limited to the return of the chosen people from exile. It also goes into those days when the messianic Branch, from David’s lineage, will establish His universal kingdom of grace.

The words “the days are coming” (v. 14), are like getting a wakeup call. It gets their attention. It is like a splash of cold water in the morning. This is like saying “stop what you are doing and pay attention to what I have to say.” Many of the Jews in exile had gotten comfortable with their lot in life and were making the best of it. They had lost sight of the long view of their spiritual life. It is easy for us to do that too. That is why we celebrate Advent each year.

“The LORD Our Righteousness” (v.16), means that the virtue of Jesus’ righteousness is given to His people. This means that Christians are holy as God looks at them because Jesus’ blood washed them clean. They now bear the His holy name. They will have full access to the throne of God because Jesus is the go-between. These long-range promises will be fulfilled as certainly as God lets day and night follow each other.

Epistle – 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

**9﻿ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ﻿10﻿ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. ﻿11﻿ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ﻿12﻿ May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ﻿13﻿ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.**

We have so much to be thankful for, yet our love needs to grow when it comes to hope-filled trust. We as hearers’ need to abound more and more in love. This will also help us to be ready for Christ’s return.

Gospel – Luke 21:25-36

**25﻿ “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ﻿26﻿ Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ﻿27﻿ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ﻿28﻿ When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” ﻿29﻿ He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ﻿30﻿ When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. ﻿31﻿ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ﻿32﻿ “I tell you the truth, this generation﻿ will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ﻿33﻿ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ﻿34﻿ “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. ﻿35﻿ For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ﻿36﻿ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” ﻿**

Jesus answers Peter and James and John and Andrews questions in 21:5-24 about the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. Then He gives predictions about the end the world (21:25–36).

The “signs” (v.25) show that God’s orderly creation becomes unstable and reverts toward chaos as the Creator begins to withdraw His kindly acts. God’s goodwill toward the originally good work of his hands is increasingly turning into anger as his patience runs out with corrupt and perverse humanity.

The cloud (v. 27) indicates the glory associated with God (Ex. 40:34 – A cloud filled tabernacle; Acts 1:9 – Ascended in a cloud).

Unbelievers cower in fear and hide their faces from the signs in the heavens. Jesus’ disciples’ stand (v. 28) erect and lift up their heads to see the Son of Man coming to free them.

Although everything may end (or appear to be over for us in our individual lives), one possession will endure forever. It is the Word of our God, the Word of life, the Word found in and through the Word, Jesus Christ (v. 33).

Jesus’ now says to “careful” (v. 34) of those things in life that can cloud our awareness of his imminent return and the fast-approaching end of the world. It’s easy to get caught up in the world and all of its busyness. Advent is meant to slow us down and to not forget why Jesus came in to first place.

In verse 36 Jesus urges His hearers to “watch and pray.” Prayers mean complete dependence upon God. No one can stand on their own in the face of what is to happen to them and to the heavens and the earth.