

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
End Times 2 - Last Judgment Sunday - November 8, 2020

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #207 - *“The Day is Surely Drawing Near”*

**The day is surely drawing near
When God’s Son, the Anointed,
Shall with great majesty appear
As judge of all appointed.
All mirth and laughter then shall cease
When flames on flames will still increase,
As Scripture truly teaches.**

**A trumpet loud shall then resound
And all the earth be shaken.
Then all who in their graves are found
Shall from their sleep awaken
And with the living in that hour
By the Almighty’s boundless pow’r
Be changed at his commanding.**

**A book is opened then to all,
A record truly telling
What each has done, both great and small,
When he on earth was dwelling,
And ev’ry heart be clearly seen,
And all be known as they have been
In thoughts and words and actions.**

**Then woe to those who scorned the Lord
And sought but carnal pleasures,
Who here despised his precious Word
And loved their earthly treasures!
With shame and trembling they will stand**

**And at the judge's stern command
To Satan be delivered.**

**My Savior paid the debt I owe
And for my sin was smitten;
Within the Book of Life I know
My name has now been written.
I will not doubt, for I am free,
And Satan cannot threaten me;
There is no condemnation!**

**O Jesus Christ, do not delay,
But hasten our salvation;
We often tremble on our way
In fear and tribulation.
Your saints are waiting patiently;
Come soon, Redeemer; make us free
From ev'ry evil. Amen.**

Confession of Sins:

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson: Daniel 7:9-10

I continued to watch until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days was seated. His clothing was white as snow, and the hair on his head was like pure wool. His throne was flames of fire. Its wheels were blazing fire. A river of fire flowed out

from his presence. Thousands upon thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and books were opened.
(EHV)

Psalm 90:

Refrain: In ev'ry age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

**Lord, you have been our 'dwelling place
Throughout all gener'ations.**

**Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth 'and the
world,
From everlasting to everlasting 'you are God.**

**For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has 'just gone by,
Or like a watch 'in the night.**

Refrain: In ev'ry age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

**You have set our iniquities be'fore you,
Our secret sins in the light of your 'presence.**

**You turn mortals 'back to dust.
You sweep them away in the 'sleep of death.**

**The length of our days is seventy years - or eighty, if we 'have the strength;
Yet their span is but trouble and 'sorrow.**

**Teach us to number our 'days aright,
That we may gain a heart of 'wisdom.**

**Glory be to the Father and 'to the Son
And to the Holy 'Spirit,
As it was in the be'ginning,
Is now, and will be forever. 'Amen.**

Refrain: In ev'ry age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

Second Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Concerning the times and dates, brothers, there is no need to write to you, for you

yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people are saying, "Peace and security," destruction will suddenly come on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will certainly not escape. But you, brothers, are not in the dark so that this day takes you by surprise like a thief, for you are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness. So then let us not sleep like everyone else, but rather let us remain alert and sober. To be sure, those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. You see, God did not appoint us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are also doing. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Watch, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. Alleluia.

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was lacking clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' The King will answer them, 'Amen I tell you: Just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you did not give me food to eat. I was thirsty and you did not give me anything to drink. I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, lacking clothes and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not take care of me.' Then they will also answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or lacking clothes or sick or in prison and did not serve you?' At that time he will answer them, 'Amen I tell you: Just as you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it for

me.' And they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (EHV)

The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe 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, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will 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.

Hymn #208 - "Great God, What Do I See and Hear?"

**Great God, what do I see and hear?
The end of things created;
The judge of mankind shall appear
On clouds of glory seated.
The trumpet sounds; the graves restore
The dead which they contained before:
Prepare, my soul, to meet him!**

**The dead in Christ shall first arise
At that last trumpet's sounding,
Caught up to meet him in the skies,
With joy their Lord surrounding.
No gloomy fears their souls dismay;
His presence sheds eternal day
On those prepared to meet him.**

**But sinners filled with guilty fears
Behold his wrath prevailing,
For they shall rise and find their tears
And sighs are unavailing;**

The day of grace is past and gone;
They trembling stand before his throne,
All unprepared to meet him.

O Christ, you died, and yet you live;
To me account your merit,
My pardon seal, my sins forgive,
And cleanse me by your Spirit.
Beneath your cross I view the day
When heav'n and earth shall pass away,
And thus prepare to meet you.

The Sermon: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
 “Day And Night - Darkness And Light”

I have a **question** for you today. How will the **last** day of human history be like the **first** day of creation? What do they have in **common**? The answer I'm **looking** for is that they both deal with **Day And Night - with Darkness And Light**. We read in Genesis 1 that on the **first** day of creation, “*God separated the light from the darkness.*” Our text for today describes the **Last Day**, and there God said, “*You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.*” On day **one** there was a **separation** of night and day, and on the **Last Day** there will be a separation of those **living** in darkness from those **living** in the light - each experiencing totally different **eternities**. But we don't need to **wait** until the **Last Day** for that **separation**, because already **now** there is a stark **difference** between those who live in the darkness of **sin** and **unbelief**, and those who live in the light of **faith** and the knowledge of **Jesus**. The words of our text are an important encouragement not to **lose sight** of these truths, as we hear that there is a big **difference** between **Day And Night - Darkness And Light**. When the Day of Judgment arrives, those who live in the **darkness** of sin will be caught by **surprise** and **condemned**, while those who live in the **light** of the Savior will be **safe and sound**.

Paul wrote, “*Concerning the times and dates, brothers, there is **no need** to write to you, for you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a **thief** in the night.*” Paul didn't need to **bother** writing to us about the **date** of Jesus' return, because we know from the **Scriptures** that God has chosen to **hide** that information from us. Nevertheless, we **do** know that the day will come like a **thief** in the night - by **surprise** - without **warning**. There will be **no advance notice** of the day when Jesus will **return**.

The Day of the Lord will be as different as **Night And Day** when it comes to the **effect** it will have on people. For **some**, the day will come as a terrible **surprise**. Our text tells us, *“When people are saying, ‘Peace and security,’ **destruction** will **suddenly** come on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will certainly not escape.”* Paul is referring to people who live in **spiritual darkness** - people who live with a **false sense** of security. They don’t feel like their **sins** will cause them any **trouble**. They don’t feel like their **souls** are in any **danger**, in **spite** of what **God** says about sin. They pay **no attention** to the **warning signs** pointing to the day of **judgment**. Their whole approach to life centers on **this** world and what it can **offer**.

Those who live in spiritual **darkness** have a virtual “Do Not **Disturb**” sign pasted to their foreheads. When it comes to **spiritual** matters, and **faith** in the Lord Jesus, they don’t want to **hear** about it. They don’t mind if people tell them news that makes them **feel good**, or that reinforces a **tolerance** for sin, or even that speaks about a **god** who couldn’t hurt a fly. But they **don’t** want to hear about a call to **repentance** - a call to **leave** their sinful ways. They don’t want to hear about a **holy** God who threatens to **punish** sinners with eternal **damnation**.

But just because they don’t want to **hear** about it, doesn’t mean that it’s not **true**. Consequently, the day of Christ’s **return** will be a day of swift **destruction** for them. As suddenly as **birth** pains come to a pregnant woman, and everything else falls to the **wayside**; so suddenly will the **Judgment Day** come - and there will be **no escape** from the eternal **destruction** that God will bring on them. They will be robbed of their earthly **fame**, their **riches**, and their **trophies** - and the biggest tragedy of all, is that they will lose their **souls** to eternal **death**.

But the day of Jesus’ return will be much **different** for those who live in spiritual **light**. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, *“You, brothers, are **not** in the dark so that this day takes you by **surprise** like a thief, for you are all sons of the **light** and sons of the **day**. We do **not** belong to the **night** or the **darkness**.”* For God’s family of **believers**, the day of the Lord will **not** come as a terrible **surprise**. Believers have the **light** of Jesus Christ - the **light** of God’s Word - **light** that leads us to **mourn** because of our sins, and to **repent** of them. God’s Word **also** shows us that **Jesus** is the **light** of the world - the **Savior** who died on Calvary’s **cross** to take away our sins - the **Savior** who **rose** from the grave with the promise that **we** **too** will live eternally. God’s Word causes our faith to burn **brightly** - to turn **away** from this world, and to live for **Christ** - to set our hearts and minds on the **eternal** treasures of **heaven** which Jesus has **reserved** for us. We know Jesus may come at

any time, and we're eagerly **waiting** for His arrival - an arrival which will bring us great **joy**.

Jesus' return is like **Day And Night**. Those who walk in the **day** won't be **surprised**, while those who walk in the **night** will be caught with sudden loss. Where do **we** fit in? Are we resting securely in **ourselves**, or do our sins cause us **alarm**? Are we **blind** to the grace of God, or are we eternally **grateful** for His mercy toward us? The answer is **clear**. We are children of the **light**.

But it wasn't **always** that way. Paul told the Ephesians, "*For you were **once darkness**, but now you are **light in the Lord**.*" We were born into this world in the darkness of **unbelief**, and we were destined for **hell**. But in **baptism**, the Lord poured His Holy Spirit into our hearts, and graciously called us **out** of darkness into His marvelous **light**. God's Word **shines** for us like a light for our **path**. It **exposes** our deeds of darkness. God's Word **shines** in our lives, so we can **see** the saving love of **Jesus**, and know that because He **paid** for our sins with His perfect **life**, we are now **forgiven**. We are children of the **day** because of God's **grace**. So let's strive to **continue** to live our lives in the **light** of God's Word, as it guides us on our path. That will make His **return** on the Last Day a **joyous** return for us - a **welcome** event which will usher in our **eternal** life in heaven.

Jesus' return is like **Day And Night**. Not only is this true of how people will **respond** to Him on the day He **returns**, but it's **also** true of how people live their lives **prior** to His return. Those who belong to the night **sleep**; while those who belong to the day are **alert**. Paul writes, "*So then let us **not sleep like everyone else**, but rather let us remain **alert and sober**. To be sure, those who **sleep**, sleep at **night**, and those who get **drunk**, get drunk at **night**. But since **we** belong to the **day**, let us be **sober**, putting on **faith and love** as a breastplate, and the hope of **salvation** as a helmet.*" Paul tells us that the people who walk in darkness are not "woke" - they are **asleep**. They have **turned off** the light of God's Word, and are sound **asleep** in the darkness of spiritual **indifference** - living their lives to obtain the **power** and **pleasures** of this world. Paul told the **Romans**, "*Although they **claim** to be **wise**, they have become **fools** ... So, as they followed the **sinful desires** of their hearts, God **handed them over** to the impurity of **degrading** their own bodies among themselves. Such people have **traded the truth** about God for the **lie**, worshipping and serving the **creation** rather than the **Creator**, who is worthy of praise forever.*" Their sense of **judgment** has been completely **distorted**. They feel **sure** that the Lord will **never** appear in **judgment**, and even if He **does**, it won't be anytime **soon**, and He certainly won't be judging **them**.

That's **not** the way **we** are supposed to think as people who walk in the **light**. Instead, Paul tells us to be **alert** and **sober**. The Lord tells us to **watch**, because the signs which will precede the Lord's return - signs which He has **provided** for us in His Word - are being **fulfilled**. Jesus Himself said, *"Watch out that no one **deceives** you. Because many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will **deceive many people** ... You will hear of **wars** and **rumors of wars** ... Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be **famines** and **earthquakes** in various places ... They will hand you over to be **persecuted**, and they will put you to **death**. You will be **hated** by all nations because of my name. Then **many will fall away from the faith**. They will **betray** each other and **hate** each other. Many **false prophets** will appear and **deceive many people**. Because **lawlessness will increase**, the **love of many will grow cold**."* If we are **watching** - if we are **alert** - I don't think the things we are seeing in our world **right now** could really be any **clearer**. Dear friends, we need to be filled with the **Holy Spirit**, so we can make **sound Christian decisions** as we patiently wait for our Lord's return.

Take the words of our text **seriously**, *"Be **alert and sober**."* Those are the characteristics which mark the people of the **day** - those who have been called to faith in **Jesus**. And our text goes on to say, *"Since **we belong to the day**, let us be **sober**, putting on **faith and love** as breastplate, and the **hope of salvation** as a helmet."* Paul pictures God's children as **soldiers** in a battle zone - men and women who put on **armor** in order to be ready for whatever **battles** they may have to face that day. We all need to be **ready**. We need to be dressed in the **armor of God**.

Two pieces of armor are specifically mentioned here by Paul. The **first** one is a **breastplate**. And the breastplate we are to wear is made up of two parts, **faith** and **love**. **Faith** takes hold of the righteousness of **Jesus** and covers our **sins**, making us **acceptable** to God. It gives us the **confidence** that Jesus will **shield** us from everything which might harm our **body** or **soul**. The **love** which is a part of our breastplate is the love of **Jesus**, who **showed** His love for us by sacrificing **Himself** to make us **holy** - **cleansing** us of all sins through the washing of **water** and the **Word**. The love of Jesus **inspires** us to show love for **one another**, as we work to **find** the lost, and to **regain** the straying, by sharing the **Gospel** with the world.

The **second** piece of armor which Paul mentions here, is the **hope of salvation**. As Christians, we look **forward** to the day of Christ's **return**, and to the **salvation** He will bring us on that day. That is our **hope** - and our hope is **certain**.

As our text tells us, “*God did **not** appoint us for **wrath**, but for obtaining **salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ. He **died** for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together **with him**.*” God wants **all** people to be **saved**, so Jesus endured the **wrath** of God **in our place**. He **suffered** and **died** for us, so that through His blood, we have **forgiveness** for all of our sins. Because of Jesus, we are destined to inherit **eternal life** with **all** its blessings and glory.

Jesus’ return is like **Day And Night - Darkness And Light**. Those who walk in **darkness** are **sleeping** in this life, and will be **very surprised** when Jesus returns and they are **condemned** for all eternity. But those who walk in the **light** are **paying attention** to the signs which God has given to us, and are **suiting up** with the armor of God, so our **faith** will be **secure**, and we will be **ready** when Jesus comes to take us home to **heaven**. Amen.

Prayers:

O heavenly Father, we confess that we have often failed to **prepare** ourselves for fighting the good fight of faith. We have often failed to make Your **love** for us the motivating force in our lives. We have **neglected** Your holy Word, through which You make our faith live and grow. Time and again we have failed to carry out the **good** intentions of our **new man**, obeying instead the **evil** desires of our **flesh**. We have failed to put our complete trust in **You**. But though we have **sinned** against You, nevertheless You are full of **mercy**. **Forgive** our sins, and preserve the faith of Your children, whom You redeemed with the blood of Your Son.

O Jesus, precious **Savior**, we thank You for that sure promise of a **crown of life** for all who persevere in their trust in You, and who do not **fall** before the assaults of the devil, the world, and our flesh. Bless us each with the gift of Your **Holy Spirit**, that He may **strengthen** us, and **arm** us for battle against the forces of evil. **Rescue** those who are already in the grip of Satan. **Reclaim** the erring. **Preserve, comfort, and build up** Your Church.

O Holy Spirit, make us ever mindful of our **spiritual** enemies, who try to put to **death** the new man within us. Help us to **overcome** those enemies through Your **Word**, and to remain **steadfast** in our faith. Give us **wisdom** to know when we are **being** tempted, and grace to **resist** those temptations. Don’t allow us to be influenced by the moral **pollution** of the world around us, but rather, help us to make the treasures of **heaven** the treasures of our **souls** - setting our minds on things **above**, where Christ dwells in glory. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn #337 - "*Delay Not! Delay Not*"

**Delay not! Delay not! O sinner, draw near!
The waters of life are now flowing for you.
No price is demanded; the Savior is here.
Redemption is purchased; God's promise is true.**

**Delay not! Delay not, O sinner, to come,
For mercy still lingers and calls you today.
Its voice is not heard in the vale of the tomb;
Its message, unheeded, will soon pass away.**

**Delay not! Delay not! The Spirit of grace,
Long grieved and resisted, may take his sad flight
And leave you in darkness to finish your race,
To sink in the gloom of eternity's night.**

**Delay not! Delay not! The hour is at hand;
The earth will dissolve, and the heavens will fade.
The dead, small and great, in the Judgment must stand -
What pow'r, then, O sinner, can lend you its aid?**

**Delay not! Delay not! Why longer abuse
The love and compassion of Jesus, your God?
A fountain is opened - how can you refuse?
Come, wash and be cleansed in his pardoning blood.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The Blessing:

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

Hymn #213 - *“Forever with the Lord”*

**Forever with the Lord!
Amen! So let it be.
Life from the dead is in that word,
My immortality.**

**While time on earth is spent,
Absent from him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day’s march nearer home.**

**My Father’s house on high,
Home of my soul, how near
At times, to faith’s foreseeing eye
The golden gates appear!**

**Lord, be at my right hand,
Then can I never fail.
If you uphold me, I shall stand;
With you I shall prevail.**

**So when my dying breath
Shall rend the veil in two,
By death I shall escape from death
To endless life with you.**

**I'll know as I am known;
How shall I love that word
And oft repeat before the throne,
"Forever with the Lord!"**