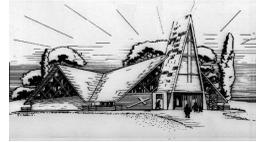




Free Evangelical Lutheran  
Synod in South Africa

## Sermon - Second Last Sunday of the Church Year

*God's Plan of Redemption trumps  
earthly destruction and violence!!*



St. John's Lutheran Parish Shelly Beach

• The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Luke 21, 5-36:

• **5** And when some were speaking concerning the temple, that it had been adorned with beautiful stones and votive offerings, he said,

**6** “These things that you see—days will come in which there will not be left a stone upon a stone that will not be pulled down.”

• **7** And they asked him, saying, “Teacher, when, therefore, will these things be? And what is the sign when these things are about to happen?”

• **8** And he said, “See that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name, saying, ‘I AM’ and ‘The appointed time has drawn near.’ Do not journey after them.

• **9** But when you hear of wars and insurrections, do not panic; for it is necessary that these things happen first, but not immediately is the end.”

• **10** Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.

• **11** There will be great earthquakes and in various places famines and plagues. There will be both terrifying events and great signs from heaven.

• **12** “Before all these things they will lay their hands on you and persecute, betraying you into the synagogues and prisons, you being led away to kings and governors on account of my name. **13** It will result for you in a witness.

• **14** So place in your hearts not to be concerned beforehand to defend yourselves.

• **15** For I myself will give to you a mouth and wisdom which all those who oppose you will not be able to stand against or speak against.

• **16** And you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put to death some of you,

• **17** and you will be hated by all because of my name.

• **18** And a hair from your head will not perish.

• **19** By your perseverance, gain your souls!

• **20** “But when you see Jerusalem being encircled by armies, then know that her devastation has drawn near!

• **21** Then those in Judea must flee into the mountains! And those in the midst of her must travel out! And those in the country must not enter her,

• **22** because these are days of vengeance, for all the things written to be fulfilled.

• **23** Woe for those who have in the womb and for those nursing in those days. For there will be a great distress over the land and wrath for this people,

• **24** and they will fall by the mouth of the sword, and they will be taken as captives to all the Gentiles, and Jerusalem will continue to be trodden upon by Gentiles until the appointed times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

• **25** “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of nations in perplexity at the sound and tossing of the sea,

• **26** while men are fainting from fear and expectation of those things coming upon

the inhabited earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

•27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and much glory.

•28 But when these things begin to happen, straighten up and lift your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

•29 And he said a parable to them, “See the fig tree and all the trees.

•30 When they already put out leaves, seeing, by yourselves you know that already the summer is near.

•31 So also you, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near!

•32 Truly I say to you that this generation will surely not pass away until all things happen.

•33 The heaven and the earth will pass away, but my words will surely not pass away.

• *Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and our hearts for the comforting message, that You know what You are doing with the world and all evil forces and with us. Open our spirit to see Your salvation dawning on the horizon! Amen.*

### • Dear Congregation in Christ!

• As Jesus was teaching in the temple, some were fascinated by the stones of the temple, how it was adorned by them and all the offerings. The beautiful holy building in Jerusalem!

• Jesus takes this as an incentive to make His teaching on the coming endtimes. Days will come when not one stone upon another will be left. This temple will be destroyed. But not only the temple in Jerusalem, Jesus said, these things that you see- all things that one sees, all material matter, the whole earth, sun and stars, the moon, all things that you see, will be destroyed. In other words, don't attach your hearts to those things!

• Then they wanted to know from Jesus, *when* this will be and what the sign will be when these things are about to take place!

• This is when Jesus said: “*See, that you are not led astray!*” That is the first thing Jesus says to His disciples as He teaches them about the endtimes! Whilst they were obsessed with the stone temple, its beauty, its location, and the details of the sign of the endtimes, Jesus directs His disciples attention to what is most important: *To be prepared for the end so that **they are not misled!***

• *This is quoted in all three Gospels! That is how important this is! The greatest danger of the endtimes are the many false prophets, false teachers, who will come in His name! What will they do? They will try and mislead the disciples, to journey with them on another catechetical road. Their catechesis will sound authentic. They will use Jesus' name. They might even claim to be Jesus Himself. Their teaching will announce with seemingly divine authority that the appointed time is at hand that the Last Day would come now to save them!*

• Lets consider what this meant for the destruction of the temple:

- The destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem happened in around 70AD. The first part of Jesus' sermon has been fulfilled the day when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. But, this was not the Last Day, as some claimed! They were the false prophets who proclaimed that God would never destroy His holy temple of stone in Jerusalem, that God would never allow the Romans to destroy the whole of Jerusalem. They prophesied that all people should stay in Jerusalem and finally in the temple. When the first Roman attacks were shielded off they seemed to be right, but then the Romans used another tactic and literally starved them to death! Josephus reported that mothers in pure desperation ate their own unborn children to stay alive. It was the most terrible disaster ever recorded! A whole nation was starved to death!
- If they had listened to the words of Jesus they wouldn't have been in the city. Because Jesus warned them and said, flee into the mountains. In other words, God will not save the temple of stone and the city!
- The false prophets were fascinated with the temple of stone, with earthly Jerusalem. They didn't realise that the living temple of God was Christ's Body. He is the new Jerusalem, the holy city.
- And now, this tragedy in 70AD was only the foreshadow of the end of all matter. And again, Jesus warns us against the false prophets who will be fascinated with what? With the stone temple in Jerusalem and with trying to work out the date of the Last Day! The Dispensationalists, Christian Zionists and many more are absolutely fascinated with the stones of the temple in Jerusalem. They are anxiously waiting for the rebuilding of the third temple!
- When they were asked to produce a New Testament Scripture which would point to the rebuilding of the third temple, they couldn't show any, because there is none. The third temple is already rebuilt, Christ's resurrected Body! We are in Christ, since Baptism, we are in the third temple right now. We don't need a stone temple in Jerusalem. The stone temple was only a foreshadow. The real temple of God is alive, our Lord Jesus Christ, and you are members of God's temple and of God's Israel.
- If another stone temple would be rebuilt it would not be on God's command. Someone else sits behind that endeavour.
- The false prophets of our days can only point to the OT prophecies and they admit, that it all depends how one interprets them. Their key of understanding Scripture is not Christ and His Body, but what happens with the temple of stone, what does God do with national Israel, with the earthly rebuilt Jerusalem, the Israel according to the flesh.
- But we know, that is not what the Bible was written to reveal. That is not the key to the Scriptures. We know that the Grace of God and His Wrath is what the Bible reveals to us. God's Gospel and His Law, His Word rightly divided in Law and

Gospel, fulfilled in Christ, the whole Christ, head and body.

- Please listen to Jesus: He says: Do not journey after them, do not follow them in their teaching, because they lead you astray! Their endtime teaching is flawed. It will lead you back to the animal sacrifices in the stone temple.

- And now we have to see, that Jesus does give some signs to His disciples to signify that the end is near [25-27]: *“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of nations in perplexity at the sound and tossing of the sea, while men are fainting from fear and expectation of those things coming upon the inhabited earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and much glory.”*

- These are the mighty signs which will happen right at the end. They are heavy stuff to say the least. People will faint of fear. There are signs in nature, the celestial bodies will act unnaturally, the oceans will roar, the solar system will be shaken- these are massive things nobody will be able to miss. Then Jesus says: *“But when these things begin to happen, straighten up and lift your heads, because your redemption draws near.”* There we have the Gospel of our Lord: When these last signs begin to happen, do not be afraid, do not drop your heads, do not put your head in the sand either. Lift up your heads, that is, notice what is going on, but see your Redemption coming on the horizon. Don't get all stuck in signs and wonders and earthly temples and earthly cities even if they are called Jerusalem.

- We are looking forward towards the heavenly Jerusalem which is the literal Jerusalem, the real Jerusalem of God. The earthly Jerusalem was only preliminary until the real temple of God and city was built on Easter morning. All prophecies of the OT prophecy onto Him, because our Redemption is alive, real, certain in Him, because He has baptised us into the new Jerusalem. Rejoice in this fact, and be or become fascinated with this eternal temple and city who came down from heaven today to cleanse you and to sanctify you, through His Word and Supper, so that you are prepared for the Last Day.

- Jesus says: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my Words will not pass away.

**Amen.**

- *The Lord keep you always in this true Faith, in Jesus' name. Amen.*