

Sermon followed by Service - November 23, 2025 Jeremiah 23:1-6

“Who can you trust?” We’d like to think the people in charge, and the people who claim to care, will do right by us. We’d like to think that the people who claim to know better will speak the truth to us. But what do we hear? A New York city sells its people a new sub-division: “Great place to live!” Later the new homeowners find out they’re sitting on toxic waste. One health expert says: “Stay away from caffeine; it messes up your metabolism.” The next expert says: “Stoke up on caffeine; it speeds up the metabolism.” Who can you trust? The people who are supposed to tell us right, get it right, make things right for us, again and again tell us wrong, get it wrong, make things wrong for us.

I imagine you could all tell me stories that would tear our hearts apart about how people who were put here to do you right did you wrong. Retirement wrecked by money done wrong. Health ruined by healthcare done wrong. A job lost by a boss gone wrong. Or it could be us here at church with church done wrong: “We’ll do this; we’ll do that; we’ll take care of you”; and it doesn’t happen. Or it might be at home - the people, your parents who tell you to get along with your brothers and sisters, but they fight and argue with themselves. Who can you trust? The people who are supposed to tell us right, get it right, make things right for us, again and again tell us wrong, get it wrong, make things wrong for us. And it hurts.

It doesn’t stop there, does it? Parents, when your children do wrong, so often who are they acting like? When your family hurts, or your business or church project founders, how many times is it because of something we did or didn’t do? When we’re supposed to tell it right, get it right, make it right, again and again we tell it wrong, get it wrong, make it wrong for the people we love. And it hurts, doesn’t it?

That’s why our God brought us together today, so we can hear from Jeremiah ... for the times our world sets us wrong ... for those times we set our world wrong - **Our LORD Makes Right!**

At the time of our lesson, life hurt for Jerusalem. The shepherds who were supposed to care for the people, cheated them. The preachers who were supposed to lead them right, lied to them and led them wrong. The leaders - in the capital, in the church, in the home - most anybody and everybody who was supposed to make things right for the people did them wrong; and the people followed them wrong. So the LORD brought Babylon with Nebuchadnezzar. Armies terrorized the countryside. Families were torn apart. Jerusalem was about to be destroyed.

Life seemed all wrong, but Jeremiah had a message of hope: **Our LORD Makes Right!** The LORD would step in and shepherd his people right. **“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD.**

Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: “Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the LORD.

For the kings and shepherds who were supposed to care for God’s people, but didn’t ... for the rich who were supposed to care for the poor, but didn’t ... for the powerful who were supposed to care for the weak, but didn’t ... for the parents who were supposed to lead their children to God, but didn’t - God would answer their evil; for the evil and hurt they imposed, God would bring his hurt; God would work his punishment. Kings were deposed; princes taken hostage; rich cheats made poor; the powerful made weak; homes, villages, cities leveled. God answered the evil of those who made life wrong for his people.

Today, God promises to do the same: **“Call on me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you.” “Vengeance is mine,” says the Lord, “I will repay!”** Even when it seems that everything is wrong and no one can be trusted, we don’t need to be afraid, we don’t have to feel down and defeated - **“If God is for us, who can be against us! There is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus!”** At the time of our lesson God used the Babylonians to clear out those who did wrong by his people. Then he used the Medes and Persians to clear out the Babylonians who did wrong by his people. Generation after generation God works his punishment against those who hurt his people. Terrorists are hunted down; corporate cheats are jailed; bullies get knocked down. Day after day God works to deliver you from evil.

Day after day God works to shepherd you right. We’ve seen it, haven’t we? It’s just not good enough to get rid of a bad ruler; he needs to be replaced by someone who does right. So our LORD promises: **“I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD.** After Jeremiah, God used Ezra and Nehemiah to bring his people back home. Years later God used John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, John, and countless more apostles, disciples, evangelists, pastors and teachers to shepherd his people. Today our LORD still works to shepherd his people right.

How? Through his church. I won’t say we’re perfect, that we always get it right. But here God gives you his Word you can trust - **“I will be your God and you will be my people. I will love you; I will forgive you; I will take the evil and the wrong of this world and make life right for you!”** Here we have a promise we can count on - in a world gone wrong, our LORD makes right!

How? That brings us to the heart of our lesson: **“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.** These verses stand apart from the rest of our lesson. Our LORD isn’t just promising to get rid of those who do his people wrong; he isn’t just promising to watch over his people right. Here our LORD is promising us our Savior. Instead of abandoning us to a world that does us wrong ... instead of abandoning us to the powers-that-be who do us wrong, the LORD promises to raise up a King to do us right.

And that’s what Jesus did! In this world gone wrong, think of how Jesus treated the broken and hurting - he healed them body and soul. The needy had his promise: **“Ask and it will be given you ...”** The guilty looking to be right heard his forgiveness: **“Your sins are forgiven you. ... Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”** Even his enemies heard his love: **“Father, forgive them.”** In a world gone wrong, Jesus did right in every way. So when God took our sin and put it on the King, Jesus did what he came to do. He took away our sin, and he went to the cross as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

What does that mean for us? With Jesus, as far as God is concerned, the world isn’t wrong anymore. With Jesus, God sees you, he counts you right! Think of what that means! In this world gone wrong, even though we have done wrong, yes, even though we have wronged the very people God gave us to treat right, instead of saying “Woe, I will rid the earth of you,” God says: “I forgive you!” Instead of seeing you wrong, he sees you with Jesus - The LORD Our Righteousness - and he counts you right! Instead of looking at us and saying: “Who can I trust?” he trusts you with his church, the hearts and children he loves. In this world gone wrong, instead of saying: “You’re all wrong” and turning his back, he says: “Well done, good and faithful servant. You are my son, my daughter whom I love. With you I am well-pleased.” Why? With Jesus, the LORD our Righteousness, God counts you right!

So the next time you wonder: “Who can I trust?” and it seems your whole world is wrong, remember our lesson - **Our LORD Makes Right!** Our LORD Shepherds us Right! Our LORD Does Right! And Our LORD counts us Right! Amen.

DIVINE SERVICE II

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we are a people who are wronged in so many ways. And worse - we are a people who wrong God and each other in so many ways.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see God step in for us, to do right for us, and to set us right for God and for heaven. Jesus is the Lord our Righteousness!

OPENING HYMN

“Wake, Awake, for night is flying”
Hymn 486

“Wake, awake, for night is flying,”
the watchmen on the heights are crying;
“awake, Jerusalem, arise!”
Midnight hears the welcome voices
and at the thrilling cry rejoices:
“Oh, where are all you virgins wise?
The Bridegroom comes, awake!
Your lamps with gladness take!
Alleluia!
With bridal care
yourselves prepare
to meet the Bridegroom, who is near.”

Zion hears the watchmen singing,
and all her heart with joy is springing;
she wakes, she rises from her gloom.
For her Lord comes down all-glorious,
the strong in grace, in truth victorious;
her star is ris’n, her light is come.
Now come, O Blessèd One,
Christ Jesus, God’s own Son.
Hail! Hosanna!
We enter all

the marriage hall
to eat the Supper at your call.

Now let all the heav'ns adore you,
let saints and angels sing before you
 with harp and cymbal's clearest tone.
Of one pearl each shining portal,
where, dwelling with the choir immortal,
 we gather round your radiant throne.
No vision ever brought,
no ear has ever caught
 such great glory;
therefore will we
in victory
sing hymns of praise eternally.

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins,
asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**

For faithless worrying and selfish pride,

For sins of habit and sins of choice,

For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,

I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.

O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy,
God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the
word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the
name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus Christ, by your victory you have broken the power of the evil one. Fill our hearts with joy and peace as we look with hope to that day when every creature in heaven and earth will acclaim you King of kings and Lord of lords to your unending praise and glory; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 23:1-6

“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: “Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the LORD. “I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD.

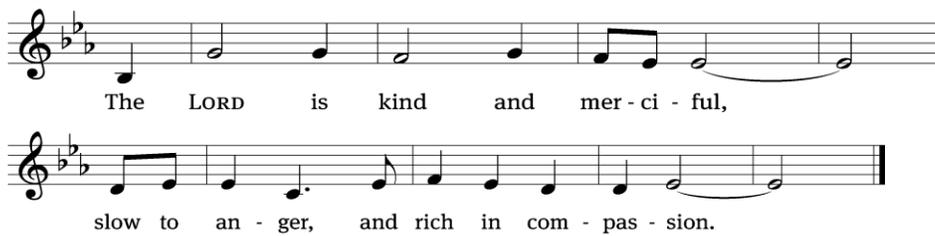
“The days are coming,” declares the LORD,
 “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
 a King who will reign wisely
 and do what is just and right in the land.
 In his days Judah will be saved
 and Israel will live in safety.
 This is the name by which he will be called:
 The LORD Our Righteousness.”

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 130A

Refrain



The LORD is kind and mer-ci-ful,
 slow to an-ger, and rich in com-pas-sion.

Tone



Praise the LORD, / my soul;
 all my inmost being, praise his / holy name—
 who forgives / all your sins
 and heals all your dis- / eases,
 who redeems your life / from the pit
 and crowns you with love and com- / passion,
 who satisfies your desires / with good things
 so that your youth is renewed like the / eagle's. *Refrain*

The LORD is compassionate and / gracious,
 slow to anger, abound- / ing in love.
 He does not treat us as our / sins deserve
 or repay us according to our in- / iquities.
 For as high as the heavens are a- / bove the earth,
 so great is his love for those who / fear him;

as far as the east is / from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions / from us.

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

SECOND READING

Revelation 22:6-13

The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

"Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll."

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!"

Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy."

"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLIMATION

Alleluia. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. Alleluia. (Matthew 24:42)

GOSPEL

Luke 12:35-40

“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

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 OF THE DAY

"Lo! He comes with clouds descending"

Hymn 487

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
once for ev'ry sinner slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
Christ reveals his endless reign.

Ev'ry eye shall now behold him
robed in glorious majesty;
those who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
shall their true Messiah see.

Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshipers.
With what rapture, with what rapture, with what rapture,
gaze we on those glorious scars!

Yea, amen, let all adore thee
high on thine eternal throne;
Savior, take the pow'r and glory,
claim the kingdom as thine own.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone!

HYMN

"All is Well"
Hymn 802

The sun beams on behind the clouds
and in the dark still grace abounds;
 all is well because of God's great love.
The road of disappointment runs
where unseen mercies wait for us,
 and all is well because of God's great love. (Refrain)

How brightly shines the love of the Father
in our Savior, Jesus Christ.
With faithful hands he fulfills ev'ry promise;
he will never leave our side.

He feels our weakness, knows our need,
and for our good he intercedes;
 all is well because of God's great love.
Through ev'ry failure, ev'ry fear,
the Lord of comfort draws us near,
 and all is well because of God's great love. (Refrain)

His coming soon will fill the sky
and all that's wrong will be made right;
 with newborn eyes we will behold
 the glory of the risen Lord.
All will be well because of God's great love;
yes, all is well because of God's great love. (Refrain)

OFFERING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, our heavenly King, grant that the closer we draw to Judgment Day the more clearly we recognize and acknowledge your claim – your blood-bought claim on our whole lives – help us to live and give as yours! **Amen.**

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



PRAYER - MAKE US WATCHFUL AND HEEDFUL

Lord God, heavenly Father,
make us watchful and heedful
in awaiting the coming of your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
that when he stands at the door and knocks,
he may find us not sleeping in carelessness and sin,

but awake and rejoicing in his appearing;
through your beloved Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one true God, now and forever.

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.

BLESSING

M: 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. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Beautiful Savior” Hymn 522

Beautiful Savior, King of creation,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love thee, truly I'd serve thee,
light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

Fair are the meadows, fair are the woodlands,
robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
he makes our sorr'wing spirit sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fair is the moonlight,
bright the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer
than all the angels in the sky.

Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration
now and forevermore be thine!

Acknowledgments

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GIFTS FOR HILLCREST

This year, we would like to bring the residents at Hillcrest Nursing Home in Round Lake some Christmas gifts!

Here is an Amazon list that shows what each person would enjoy:



You are welcome to shop from the Amazon list or shop on your own, but either way, please let Karlie Massey (karkar1426@gmail.com) know when you've picked up specific items so that she can mark them off the list. Please note the gift recipients' names are in the comments section of each item. Clothing items have been selected in the sizes requested, and or colors requested, if applicable.

Like last year, I would like to incorporate our Sunday school/youth group kids to have them help wrap gifts and make cards. All gifts are due to Karlie by December 13. Items purchased from the Amazon list can be sent directly to Karlie or you can bring them to church/school. (Please let Karlie know if you are leaving gifts for her at St. John.) Thank you for your help and generosity!