

Sermon followed by Service

September 1, 2024

Daniel 12

Picture your favorite picture of heaven. The wedding banquet - the feast - the city with streets paved with gold - paradise with the river of life and the tree of life. Picture your favorite picture of heaven - life the way it's supposed to be with no more death or mourning or crying or pain.

What's your favorite picture of heaven? Have you shared this with family and friends?

What's between now and then, here and there? In the book of Revelation, Jesus shows John, and John shows us. In our lesson today, Jesus told Daniel, and Daniel tells us. Daniel called it a great warfare. Jesus called it a time of distress. When you hear that word "distress," what comes to mind? A time of uncontrollable, heart-rending pain and tears. In the English, distress can mean agony. In the Hebrew, the word is even more painful. Distress is the feeling of being bound up, trapped, no where to go, no one to help; distress is the feeling that the world is about to crush you. In the Bible, distress describes the pain of childbirth, the fear of facing an army, a bloodthirsty, raping army.

Jesus told Daniel, "**There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.**" Worse than what Daniel faced when he was torn from his home and sent into captivity. Worse than what Jerusalem faced when it was attacked and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Worse

than what God's people faced in the first part of Daniel chapter 11, when God's people would be attacked for their faith, tortured on the rack, cooked in brass pots. **“There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.”** In the last part of Daniel 11, Jesus tells Daniel the warfare, the distress wouldn't just be political, but religious, not just physical, but spiritual. In our Gospel lesson, we heard Jesus tell his disciples it would be a time of wars and rumors of wars, pitting people against each other, killing, destroying, tearing people apart; a time of false teachers and false Christs twisting truth and so twisting hearts and hope; a time of more and more wickedness, a time when hearts, most hearts will turn cold, uncaring. At that time, it will look like the church can not and will not survive. In Revelation, Jesus pictures this time this way - beasts of evil and judgments from God until Satan and his forces of evil from all over the world have God's people surrounded, about to be destroyed.

We hear that and we wonder. Like Daniel, we wonder: “How long? What do we do?”

Jesus has a pair of angels helping Daniel to understand. How long? **“A time, times, and half a time.” “From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.”** The angel's answer doesn't help much, does it? We'll look it more in Bible Class. Here, let me just say this: “a time” - a set time, “times” - a set time that seems to go on and on, “and half a time” - a set time that seems to go on and on and on, but then

mercifully, it comes to a quick end. How long will that warfare, this time of distress, last? A long time; a long, long time; but a set time.

What do we do with that? That's what Daniel wanted to know. Here's the angels' answer: "**Go your way. Go your way till the end.**" The answer isn't: "Hunker down and hide." The answer isn't: "Stand up and fight." So what are we to do? "**Go your way.**"

In this time of distress, how do you see Christ's church dealing with the distress of Satan's war against God and his church?

I expected more. A sentence, a paragraph, a page, something more than "**Go your way.**" In fact, God did give us more, a whole book of the Bible - 1 Peter, a letter for Christians living in a hostile, anti-Christian world. But here, just: "**Go your way.**" With the world echoing in my ears - "Be true to yourself. Do what you want. Do whatever feels right to you." - it's easy to hear "**Go your way**" in a way that God doesn't mean. But God isn't speaking to the world out there. And God isn't speaking to the world in me. God is speaking to Daniel, a man of God, a child of God, a servant of God. A child and servant of God whose first care and concern is to seek first the kingdom of God - to live and to do for the glory of God and the good of his people. That was Daniel's way. And so the angel says: "**Go your way.**"

And now, today, how do we hear “**Go your way**”? Not as people of the world, but as people of God. People who know: “**Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.**” People who know: “**Love the LORD your God with all your heart.**” People who know: “**Love your neighbor as yourself.**” So here and today, God speaks to you and to me, like he spoke to Daniel, as people who aren’t set on living life for self, but as people eager to live life God’s way - for the glory of God and the good of his people. That’s why God can say “**Go your way,**” because he knows we sing: “Let us ever walk with Jesus.”

How do you understand the angel’s answer: “Go your way”?

What Bible lessons, hymns ... especially inspire, encourage, guide “your way” in facing the distress of evil’s war against God and his people?

It’s not easy, is it? We see what the powers of evil are doing out there, we feel what the powers of evil are doing in here [our hearts], we see the world war against God and we feel the distress, and we wonder: “How? How in the world can I live the life God has for me? How will I ever be able to make it?”

Jesus has a promise for us, or a set of promises for us. For one, we’re not alone in the battle. A couple weeks ago we heard him promise: “**Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged. For the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.**” Today, Jesus adds for Daniel and for us: “**At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise.**” We’ll

talk more about Michael and the angels on “Michael and the Angels Sunday” on September 29. Today, as Satan and his demon forces wage their war of evil against God and his people, today Jesus has the archangel Michael and his armies standing up to fight for us. Put that together with what we have already seen in Daniel ... No matter how the people powers of this world wage their war of evil against God and his people, we have the Rock (chapter 2) crushing and replacing every earthly power; we get to know - in the end, our Rock will rule forever. At the same time, no matter how the powers of this world distress us, we get to see the Son of Man (chapter 7) setting up his kingdom in heaven, setting us up to rule with him in heaven forever. Yes, we get to rule with Jesus in heaven. We might wonder: “How can that be? After what evil has done to us, scarring us ... after what we have done, joining in the sin of the world, joining in the guilt of the world, how can it be that we aren’t crushed and replaced, how can it be that we aren’t thrown into the fires of judgment, how can it be that we get to be with Jesus and even rule with Jesus? Daniel chapter 9 - in Jesus, God has put an end to our rebellion against him; in Jesus, God has put an end to our sin; in Jesus, our sin and guilt are forgiven, and in Jesus, we are made right for life made right with God. Today, that’s true, no matter what happens around us or to us.

What’s your favorite promise to get you through these end time?

How have you shared that promise with others? How recently?

How does the book of Daniel help you through these end times?

With whom have you shared the message of Daniel?

And some day, like Daniel - some day, as we sang earlier - some day “to faithful warriors comes their rest.” Rest. No more distress around us, no more distress inside us. We get to look forward to rest with Jesus. But even better, we get to look forward to getting up, to rising, to resurrection. Our end isn’t just rest and relief from our distress. We get to look forward to waking up to a new life, life the way it’s supposed to be in heaven. And that favorite picture of heaven you have, you’ll find the real heaven is even better. Amen.

We didn’t touch on it in this sermon, but looking at Daniel 12:9, how do you see yourself being purified and refined during this time of distress? How does that verse shape your understanding of your purpose in this time of evil’s warfare against God and his people?

August 31 & September 1, 2024

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... with Labor Day weekend, we celebrate the opportunity to get away from hard work and to enjoy rest.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we also celebrate rest, not just from hard work, but from a hard life. But we also celebrate something better than rest here in this world; we celebrate resurrection to a new life with God in heaven!

OPENING HYMN

"For All the Saints"
Hymn 880 vs. 1-5

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
who thee by faith before the world confessed,
thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;
thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Oh, may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold
fight as the saints who nobly fought of old
and win with them the victor's crown of gold. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
yet all are one in thee, for all are thine. Alleluia! Alleluia!

And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long,
steals on the ear the distant triumph-song,
and hearts are brave again and arms are strong. Alleluia! Alleluia!

INVOCATION

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

+ CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION +

- M: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.
- C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**
- M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

+ PRAYER AND PRAISE +

LORD, HAVE MERCY

- M: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.
- C: **Lord, have mercy.**
- M: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.
- C: **Christ, have mercy.**
- M: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.
- C: **Lord, have mercy.**
- M: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:
- C: **Amen.**
- M: The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.

HYMN

“For All the Saints”

Hymn 880 vs. 6-8

The golden evening brightens in the west;
soon, soon, to faithful warriors cometh rest;
sweet is the calm of paradise the blest. Alleluia! Alleluia!

But, lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day:
the saints triumphant rise in bright array;
the King of glory passes on his way. Alleluia! Alleluia!

From earth’s wide bounds, from ocean’s farthest coast,
through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia! Alleluia!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and everlasting God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Daniel 12

“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.”

Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?”

The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."

I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

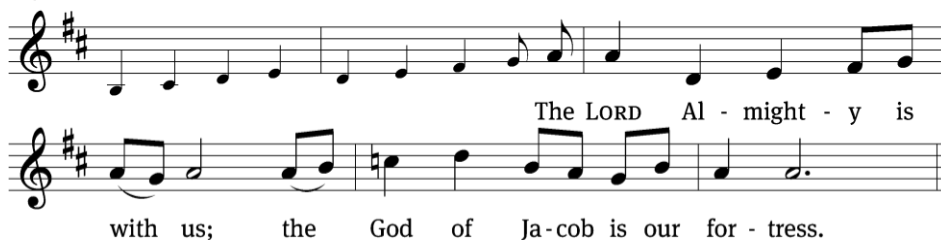
"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 46A

Refrain



The LORD Al - might - y is
with us; the God of Ja - cob is our for - tress.

Tone



God is our ref- / uge and strength,
an ever-present help in / trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the / earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart / of the sea,
though its waters / roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their / surging. *Refrain*

There is a river whose streams make glad the cit- / y of God,
the holy place where the Most / High dwells.
God is within her, she / will not fall;
God will help her at / break of day.
“Be still, and know that / I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted / in the earth.”
**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**

GOSPEL

Mark 13:1–2, 5–8, 13–15, 20–23, 26–27

As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”

“Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

“When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out.

“If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

“At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart”

Hymn 817

Lord, thee I love with all my heart; I pray thee, ne’er from me depart,
with tender mercy cheer me. Earth has no pleasure I would share;
yea, heav’n itself were void and bare if thou, Lord, wert not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break, my trust in thee can nothing shake.
Thou art the portion I have sought; thy precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord,
forsake me not! I trust thy Word.

Yea, Lord, ’twas thy rich bounty gave my body, soul, and all I have
in this poor life of labor. Lord, grant that I in ev’ry place
may glorify thy lavish grace and help and serve my neighbor.
Let no false doctrine me beguile; let Satan not my soul defile.
Give strength and patience unto me to bear my cross and follow thee.
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord,
in death thy comfort still afford.

Lord, let at last thine angels come, to Abr'ham's bosom bear me home
that I may die unfearing; and in its narrow chamber keep
my body safe in peaceful sleep until thy reappearing.
And then from death awaken me that these mine eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, thy glorious face, my Savior and my fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer attend, my prayer attend,
and I will praise thee without end.

SERMON

Daniel 12

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING

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PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Gracious God and Father, we praise you for the countless blessings, which we receive from your hand: the beauties of creation and the bounties of the earth, the joy of life and the pleasure of friendship, the good of work and the gift of rest, the privilege to share happiness and sorrow with one another. Above all we praise and thank you for your saving Word and for your Son's body and blood, which you give us to eat and to drink in the sacrament. Through these means of grace, you send the Holy Spirit into our hearts and unite us to Jesus and to the whole Christian Church on earth.
Strengthen us through this heavenly food; increase our trust in Christ and our love for one another.

Great God and Lord, without your continuing help we easily waver in our faith, lose courage, and grow careless in our watchfulness. The times and days are perilous. Give us strength to face the evils of each day with fresh confidence. Open our lips to speak of your grace, and move us to use the gifts that you give us to share your Word of salvation with all people. Protect and prosper the family, the school, the government, and all good institutions that you have established for the benefit of society. Remember in mercy those who are sick and suffering, and bring your healing to troubled homes and lives.

Move us to pray for those in need and to help them with deeds of kindness.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

Now, eternal God and Father, keep us in the saving faith and so enable us to overcome all things through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He sends the Holy Spirit to testify that we are his children and to strengthen us when we are weak. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *Sanctus* (No Introduction) (Sung)

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory. You are my God and I will exalt you. I will give you thanks for you have become my salvation. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei* (No Introduction) (Sung)

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won"

Hymn 444

Jesus lives! The vict'ry's won! Death no longer can appall me.
Jesus lives! Death's reign is done! From the grave Christ will recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence; this shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! To him the throne high o'er heav'n and earth is given.
I shall go where he is gone, live and reign with him in heaven.
God is faithful; doubtings, hence! This shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! For me he died; hence will I, to Jesus living,
pure in heart and act abide, praise to him and glory giving.
All I need God will dispense; this shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! I know full well nothing me from him shall sever.
Life nor death nor pow'rs of hell part me now from Christ forever.
God will be a sure defense; this shall be my confidence.

Jesus lives! And now is death but the gate to life immortal;
this shall calm my trembling breath when I pass its gloomy portal.
Faith shall cry, as fails each sense: Jesus is my confidence!

CLOSING PRAYER

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.

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

"Jerusalem the Golden"

Hymn 889

Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest—
the sight of it refreshes the weary and oppressed.
I know not, oh, I know not what joys await us there,
what radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare:
to sing the hymn unending with all the martyr throng,
amidst the halls of Zion resounding full with song.

O sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country that eager hearts expect,
where they who with their leader have conquered in the fight
forever and forever are clad in robes of white:
in mercy, Jesus, bring us to that dear land of rest
where sings the host of heaven your glorious name to bless.

The Christ is ever with them, the daylight is serene;
the pastures of the blessed are ever rich and green.
There is the throne of David, and there, from care released,
the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast.
To God enthroned in glory the Church's voices blend,
the Lamb forever blessed, the Light that knows no end.

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