



## Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

November 5, 2006

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of End Time

Revelation 14:6,7

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Jeremiah 18:1-11

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 46

Second Lesson: Revelation 14:6,7

Gospel: Mark 13:5-11

### **Proclaim the Eternal Gospel**

Buildings are built for certain purposes, right? You can still lay a great foundation, but if the rest of the building isn't built to fit the purpose of your building, you are going to have problems. To the best of my knowledge the building you are sitting in has a very good foundation, but if you came here this morning expecting to play basketball, you were kind of surprised when you walked in, right? This building doesn't lend itself very well to basketball with all the pews in the middle, nor would it lend itself well for a swimming competition. It has a good foundation, but it wouldn't serve those purposes because that is not what it was designed for. You can have a good foundation, but if you try to change the purpose of what that foundation was laid for, it can goof things up also.

As we talk about building together in Christ this morning, we see what a blessing it is that the foundation that Jesus Christ has laid—his perfect life in our place and his death in our place to take away all of our sins—that those who have come before us, our spiritual forefathers if you will, built faithfully and carefully on that foundation because the purpose of the building which is God's body, the church, is to proclaim the eternal gospel. That's it. That is what we are here for. That is why this building exists of living stones built one on another—which is all believers. We exist to proclaim the eternal gospel.

If those who had come before us had fallen into false teachings, that purpose wouldn't be served as well among us if we thought it was our efforts that saved us; if we thought there was something we had to do that saved us. We would not have the confidence that we have today—the confidence that we rejoice in that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, and Scripture alone is the authority in matters that relate to doctrine. That is the heritage we have been given through the Reformation and as we see today, that is what our God wants us to do—proclaim the eternal gospel.

So think a little bit with me about what a blessing that is—that it was done faithfully before us. Then also think of the blessing that we give to those who come after us as we seek to build faithfully using this eternal gospel that we proclaim.

This section of Revelation that we are looking at in Chapter 14, verses 6 and 7, follows a couple of chapters of nothing but bad news. Nothing but bad news of forces coming up that would confront God's people on earth. In Revelation it gives you these visions, these pictures, and it is circular as we have talked about before. It isn't linear that it starts at the beginning and then it goes to the end time wise. But it gives you pictures of how after Christ's ascension into heaven until he comes again there will be those that

will attack the church; there will be threats that come to the church from outside of the church and from inside of the church that seek to compromise the truth that we are saved by Jesus alone. In Chapters 12 and 13 it talked about some great threats. It is scary stuff to read. You read it and you think, “If that is what we are facing and that is what we are always going to face, what hope is there?” In the verses right before our text in 1-5, it talked about the picture of God’s people that have been called out of the Great Tribulation and are with the Lord and how they are worshipping him and how they are enjoying the glory of heaven. It tells us, in a sense, “don’t worry, God is still in control and he will bring his people to himself; all those who believe that Jesus took away their sins.”

God knows us and he knows our weaknesses. He knows where our knees tremble and where our knees knock because we would hear about heaven and we would say, “That’s nice God, but what about us? What about here? What about now?” So God says, “Here is what I have for you. As you face all these things, all these threats, all these challenges, as you face things that just tear you apart inside and out, here is what I want you to focus on. *I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people*” (Revelation 14:6). This is what he offers us as comfort and confidence in the face of the challenges of living in a sinful world—proclaim the eternal gospel. It is what you have. It is the weapon you have to defend yourself against the attacks. It’s the weapon you have to go on the offensive against Satan who is really our enemy and our adversary. When he brings attacks from within the church, use the Word of God. Scripture alone is the authority—not the teachings of men about Scripture, but Scripture itself; not what those who have taught before us may say, but Scripture itself.

We can err. That is why Paul commended the Bereans, right? *They were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true* (Acts 17:11). That is what God wants us to do—proclaim the eternal gospel and immerse ourselves in it day after day after day.

Threats and challenges come to God’s church. They have come in the past. The idea that the early church struggled with—some teachers said Jesus isn’t true God. Some said he wasn’t true man and that he just masqueraded as a man. The church struggled through God’s Word and said, “It says he is God. It says he is man. I can’t understand it. I don’t have to understand it. If that is what God says, that is what he is.” They fought off that challenge because if we deny that Jesus is God, we have a false God. As we heard again in this affirmation of baptism this morning, we are baptized into the name of our God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. If we say that Jesus isn’t man, then he couldn’t have lived under the law in our place perfectly and have that credited to us because he is also true God. The church struggled with those things.

The church struggled with something that we are always all going to struggle with—the idea that we have to **do** something to appease God. It says it so clearly in Scripture, and if you look at Romans 11 it says it so clearly—we are saved by grace, not works. If you want to add works to it, then it is no longer grace. Grace is God’s undeserved love

and if you add works to it, you no longer have grace. You have only got works. What we do does not save us.

We do what God says to do—not because we have to appease his anger or his wrath—we do what we do because he lived and died in our place. He took away our sins. Now we want to teach faithfully. Now we want to preach carefully. Now we want to live to his glory. Now we want to proclaim that eternal gospel—not because he told us to or we have to, but because he took away our sins and now we **get** to. In the past there were those that saw that truth and shared it. Our spiritual forefathers, from Augustine to Luther to Walther to the various people that have come before us in this place, the pastors, the teachers, the individual Christians that shared God's Word and saw to it that there would be this place so we at this time could come together and rejoice as we hear the eternal gospel proclaimed; to worship God, to fear God, to know that the Creator is the One who gives us the water of eternal life—the living water—we get to do this day after day and week after week.

One other thing our God reminds us is that as we do this—as we worship him, as we serve him—we are also building his kingdom. As we proclaim the eternal gospel, we build each other up. That is what we are here for. We have a responsibility to our fellow believers to use the gospel to encourage them and to build them up with whatever challenges they are facing. Sometimes it is surprising exactly who it is that takes up that challenge and builds each other up.

This past week we had a great tragedy in our family of believers and it amazed me to watch the young people of our congregation encourage one another with the gospel; to cling to that gospel in the face of heartache, to use that gospel to encourage one another and support one another and show love for one another was something that just absolutely amazed me. I can't tell you how proud I am of the young people of our congregation for the way they encouraged each other. I can't tell you also how proud I am of how God has worked in us so that we show this kind of love to one another and that we drop what we are doing to hold each other and hold each other up with God's everlasting arms, his ever-loving arms.

We build and we build in God's kingdom and sometimes you wonder what exactly we are accomplishing, but when you see God's people show love and support for one another and point one another to God's love in Christ as the only certainty in an uncertain world, you see why it is that we work and we labor to build. You see why it is that we spend so much time getting into the Word and making use of the Sacraments so that we can be strengthened so that when tragedy comes, we respond. We respond with God's love and we show that love to one another.

We are building the church. We are being a blessing, not only to each other but to those who come after us. The only way we will be a faithful blessing is if we continue to proclaim God's eternal gospel clearly, faithfully and with the joy that comes from knowing that we ourselves have been forgiven for the times that we have failed. We ourselves have been forgiven for the times that we have let other things come before God. We ourselves are forgiven for the things that we have done and that we have left undone. We are forgiven and strengthened by this forgiveness and we can soar to

heights that you really think are unimaginable. But I have seen God do it among us and I believe that he will continue to do it among us as we proclaim the eternal gospel.