



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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November 6, 2011

2nd Sunday of Endtime: Last Judgment

Sermon Text: [Matthew 25:31-46](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Daniel 7:9-10](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 90](#)

Second Lesson: [Romans 2:2-11](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 25:31-46](#)

The King Will Come At Ages End

1. The Sights and Sounds
2. The Sustaining Promise

In a few short weeks, we will start the season of Advent and start preparing to celebrate our Savior's first coming into the world at Bethlehem. Today we focus on his second coming. They're quite a bit different when you look at them, aren't they? If he was an Olympic high diver, he didn't make a ripple when he entered the water for his first coming, did he? He was born in a little podunk town in Israel. He was in a stable. Nobody would have known that anything was going on, except for Mary of course, except that the angels came and sang to some shepherds, right? Other than that, there was nothing screaming "this is God become flesh" to anyone that would have been around there at that moment. God entered humanity as true God and true man and hardly a ripple.

Yet when we read this morning of his second coming, the sights and the sounds are amazing, aren't they? The Lord will come at ages ends and everybody is going to know it. He isn't going to need anyone to go say, "Hey, go check out the swaddling cloths and the little manger thing." Everyone is going to know in an instant that Christ has returned. So as you stop and consider these sights and sounds, some of them might be a little scary, but our Lord who comes at ages end, our King who returns gives us a promise that sustains us until that time, and through that time, and for all eternity. That comforting truth we also want to focus on today.

First of all, the sights and the sounds. I can't begin to imagine this. There are a lot of incredible things we see in life, right? The Lions have a winning record...things you never expect would happen. But I can't begin to imagine what was just described for us. The Son of Man comes in his glory. He's still true God and true man for all eternity, but now he has his divine glory again. Whenever you read about God in his full glory in Scripture, it's always like the Holy Spirit is leading the human writers to try to put into words what you can't put into words.

We heard it with Daniel, right? His clothes are white. His hair is white. Everything is white. At Transfiguration we see Jesus like lightning, glowing almost like the sun. They are trying to describe God in his full glory and we, as sinners, just can't begin to comprehend. So when it says he is coming in his full glory, we think, "Okay, it says he's coming in his full glory," but really, we have no idea what that means, do we? We don't know glory. We know sin. We know the results of sin in the world. We don't even

know the perfect world God created for us. So the idea that you and I are going to wrap our heads around God in his full glory? I can't begin to imagine, but God paints a picture for us to say "this is going to be something else."

He also tells us all the angels are coming with him and they are going to be around him. Then he tells us all nations on earth will be gathered together. All the nations will be gathered before him. That's just not the nations that are living at that time. We are told in other places in Scripture that all the dead will be raised. So everyone that ever has existed at that point in time will be brought before God.

I can't begin to imagine that either, can you? I can't imagine how there is going to be all those people there. He says we are going to be gathered together and he'll be there and everyone will be there. I can't begin to even picture that. But the one thing I do think I have figured out is that we aren't going to be looking around to say "Who is that over there?" Or "Who is over there? Is that Luther? Who is that? Is that Paul? Is that Peter?" We aren't going to be looking around to see who is around us because I have to believe at that point in time we won't be able to peel our eyes away from Jesus in his full glory. That kind of makes sense, doesn't it? There's God in his full glory. I'm not going to be looking around. I love you guys in Christ, but I'm not going to be looking for you right then and there. My eyes aren't going to be taken off of Jesus. So again it's something I can't begin to imagine, that sight. Everyone that has ever lived gathered together, the angels in their glory and God in his glory, and we're all there looking at him. It's going to be amazing. It's going to be wonderful. But what exactly it is, I can't tell you.

Those are some of the sights, right? Now let's look at some of the sounds he tells us. He tells us what he is going to be doing. I don't know if there is going to be the sound of shuffling of feet or how he is going to do it, but he is going to separate the believers on the right, the righteous, the sheep, on the right and the unbelievers, the goats, on the left. Then he tells us he is going to announce the basis of his judgment. Now here is where it might get a little confusing to us to tie back into what we looked at in Romans 2, right?

Did that kind of scare you in Romans 2 a little bit? "To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life." Last week, didn't we spend the whole time talking about how we are saved by grace alone, by faith alone, not by being good? Wasn't that our emphasis? I know you and you know me. If you and I are going to get to go on the right because "by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality," we're in trouble, right?

Then you hear Jesus in what we read in Matthew talking about what people did, right? We always talk about how we are saved by faith and now Paul says by doing good here, Jesus says "I was hungry. I was thirsty. I needed clothes. I was sick and all these things, and you did this, this or this for me." It's all a list of what we do. You and I

know we don't always do what we are supposed to do, so where is our comfort? Where is our confidence? Is it salvation by faith, or is it salvation by persistence in doing good? Yes.

You have to remember...what is good in God's eyes? When you look at that list and when he makes that same statement to the unbelievers, "You didn't do this for me," do you think unbelievers ever did some of this stuff for other people? Sure they did. There are a lot of good people that don't believe in Jesus Christ, right? They do a lot of good and help other people, right?

So what makes something good in God's eyes? If you or I see someone hungry and give them something to drink, you have to believe an unbeliever saw someone hungry and gave them something to eat. Why is it good when we do it, and it's not good when they do it? There has to be something else going on, right?

This is why what the rest of Scripture says becomes so important to us. In the Book of Hebrews we are told that without faith it is impossible to please God. (See [Hebrews 11:6](#).) So you can do all these things that Jesus lists, and if you don't do it out of love for him, it's not good in his eyes, right? If you are going to persist in doing good, the only way you can persist in doing good (to use Paul's words) is to have a faith that is always active and always focused on God and then reflect that in your life. You persist in doing good because you want to honor God. That's the part of you that loves God. That new self inside of you wants to do that. It doesn't have to, it wants to, it gets to. An unbeliever doesn't have that part. They might do good, but they aren't doing it for the right reason. Good in God's eyes is both what you do and why you do it. According to God's will...what you do. Out of love for God...why you do it. An unbeliever can't do anything out of love for God. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

So when Jesus points to all these actions, he's really saying he's pointing to the evidence of faith in our hearts that moves people to do things out of love for God and according to his will.

But notice the interesting action of the believers. "Lord, when did we do all this stuff? I don't remember doing any of that for you?" The Christian life is not about having a checkmark on a to do list. "I've done this, done this and done this. Okay God, now you have to let me into heaven." That's not the Christian life. Christians, by their very nature, they love God and they want to do these things. They do them. It's not like they are keeping a record of them so they can say "God, you owe me heaven." This is the nature of the Christian faith, right? We want to serve God. We want to do these things.

At the same time, we know we are sinners, and we know we have failed our God. We have every desire to do what God wants us to do, like Paul talks about, "The good I want to do, that I do not do. The evil I do not want to do, that I keep doing." (See [Romans 7:15-17](#).) So if our confidence is only going to be in ourselves, we have none.

Our confidence is in our Savior. Our confidence is in the works he has done for us. He lived in our place. He died in our place. He rose again. He sent the Spirit into our hearts. The Spirit gave us the gift of faith. That gift of faith has declared us righteous. So all the times where you and I have failed in this area, we are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

That's why we can do what God says in Scripture. He says when you see these things start to happen, the signs of the ends of the ages, lift up your heads because your Savior is coming back. Think of what that phrase means "lift up your heads." I always thought this was such a wonderful comforting thing. When I was growing up and I did something I wasn't supposed to do, the one or two times that happened, and mom said "Wait until your dad gets home"; when dad came in the door, do you think I was standing in the door with my face smiling looking up at him? Or was I hiding in some part of the house waiting to get called down? Can you relate to that? Do you know what I'm talking about? When we are guilty and we know we are guilty, we don't want to lift up our face and look that person in the eye.

Look at this promise that God gives us. Those who are righteous will go to eternal life. He says lift up your face and look God in the eye when he comes back because you have been declared righteous. God has taken away your sins through the life and death of Christ. You don't have to carry the guilt that comes because we haven't done everything we want to do. Christ washed it away. We are righteous in his eyes. This is what gives us confidence as we face all the terrible things we are going to face between now and the day Christ comes back. Cling to that truth.

We are righteous. Heaven is ours. That's an objective truth; it's outside of ourselves. Nothing can separate us from that truth. None of the hardships we go through, none of the difficulties we face can take away the fact that God has made us righteous. Heaven is ours. We are just waiting for the Last Judgment to come for God to give us what he has told us is already ours, because he's given us the gift of faith.

That promise, those who are righteous will go to eternal life, that's what you and I have, and that's what you and I need to cling to, and that's what you and I need to share with one another until that day when Christ comes. Never get tired of hanging onto that truth and never get tired of sharing that truth with one another. That's the glorious truth of God's love for us in Christ that sustains us until the King comes at ages end.