



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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November 4, 2012
Endtime 1 - Reformation
Sermon Text: [Revelation 14: 6-7](#)
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Daniel 3:16-28](#)
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 46](#)
Second Lesson: [Revelation 14: 6-7](#)
Gospel Lesson: [Mark 13:5-11](#)

Listen to the Eternal Message

It will sharpen your focus
It prepares you for the hour of judgment

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Do you know anyone like this? They go to the doctor for a checkup. The doctor tells them "You need to change A, B and C or you are going to be having problems down the road." They nod and say "Yep. Yep." They go back the next year and the doctor says "You're going to have to change A, B and C or you're going to have problems down the road." "Yep. Yep."

Before they get to the next year, they have problems down the road. They wake up in the Intensive Care Unit and the doctor says "You need to change A, B and C" and the person says "What were they again?" Now they become very important and now they start paying attention and now they start thinking about how they are going to change the diet, how they are going to get exercise, and how they are going to do all the things the doctor has been telling them every year over and over and over. Do you know anyone like that? Our Lord does. The person the Lord is talking to is sitting in your pants.

In [Revelation 12 and 13](#), he is telling us these are the problems that are going to come down the road. He's telling us what is going to happen in the New Testament Era. He is telling us how Satan is going to attack God's church, and God's church is going to suffer. He is getting us to that point. Here's the problem. He's trying to get our attention just like the doctor does when he is telling you, "Here it is. Problems are going to come." And you just kind of nod and let it go in one ear and out the other.

Sometimes that's how you and I are with our Lord too. He tells us that there is going to be difficulty and we say "Yeah. Yeah." Then when disasters come, when dangers come, when difficulties come, we say "Hey God! Where are you? Why are you letting this happen in my life?" All along he said it was going to be there. All along he's been painting that same picture, and we've just been letting it go in one ear and out the other.

This morning we are going to take a little time and kind of go over very quickly [Revelation 12-13](#). They are kind of tough chapters with a lot of symbolic pictures. If you read them, you are going to shake your head and say "I have no clue what he is

talking about.” Hopefully after we talk about it today you’ll understand what the picture is that led to this part of the vision of the whole New Testament Era that I read to you from verses 6 and 7. This part is telling us when the world is going to hell in a handbasket around you, here is what you need to do... listen to the eternal Gospel. Listen to the eternal Gospel. Listen to the eternal Gospel.

God is promising us he’ll always send angels, messengers that will bring the eternal Gospel throughout time. When we are facing all these difficulties that he tells us about, he wants us to listen to the eternal Gospel. He’ll sharpen your focus.

The things that God talks about in [Revelation 12 and 13](#) are going to distract us and take our focus away. Did you ever look at the world around you today and go “Man, I don’t know what this world is coming to. Things are so terrible. People are saying so many things that are against God and everyone is now agreeing with them. I don’t know what my kids or my grandkids or my great-grandkids are going to do.” Did you ever have that thought race through your mind? If you’ve been awake, you probably have. That’s the picture God paints in [Revelation 12-13](#).

He gives us this in symbolic images. You have the whole New Testament Era in chapters [12, 13 and 14](#). It is one vision that contains seven different visions that are the whole New Testament Era. And the point of the whole vision is that things look terrible because Satan attacks God’s church over and over, but with Christ, we win.

The terrible picture at the beginning is there is a dragon. The dragon is Satan. He’s identified as such. It talks about a woman who appears to be the community of believers. Out of the community of believers, a child is born. That child is the Savior who will rule with an iron scepter. It says that the dragon is waiting there to devour the child when it’s born, but the Lord protects the child. The Lord takes the child back up to heaven, Jesus’ Ascension, and then the dragon turns his attention on the woman, the group of believers, God’s church. Satan is mad! It says those who will be killed will be killed. Those who will go into captivity will go into captivity. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.

He tells you it’s going to be tough. He tells you that he uses these symbolic images of this dragon that are just weird and bizarre, but what it’s saying is that Satan is really mad because Jesus defeated him and now he has been cast out of heaven. He’s let loose on the earth as it talks about in Scripture, and he’s going to use everything at his resources to attack God’s people.

It uses this image of a beast that comes out of the sea, and the beast looks goofy with all kinds of horns and all that kind of stuff. If you’ve read Revelation, you know what I’m talking about. It appears symbolically that this beast is a picture of government authority that attacks the church. Throughout history you can see evidences of that. I know many of you are real worried about that now with the election coming up on Tuesday of it happening yet today. But this beast is worshiped as a god, kind of like what the Romans did with their emperor. They worshiped him as a god. We’re not too

far from that today anymore, are we? We want the government to fix every last problem we've ever had as though the government is divine. So Satan attacks through that beast.

After that beast that came out of the sea, there is one that comes out of the earth. This one symbolically is the apostate church, those that have fallen away but remain in the church and undermine the pure Gospel of salvation by faith alone, through grace alone, and Scripture alone as the authority by adding other things to it, whatever they might be, whether it's works, whether its demands of other things. Anytime you say, "Yes, Jesus lived and died for you, but you have to do this, this and this in order to be saved," you've just gutted the Gospel of all its power. It says that's what happens from within the church.

So you have forces outside the church, forces inside the church, and you look at it and go "There's no hope for us!" Sometimes you look around today and you think the same thing. Then that's when God comes and tells us that the lamb had won the victory and the lamb is with all believers from all time, the 144,000. That's the symbolic number for that. They rejoice and the Lord sends out this angel that I read to you about earlier. The angel comes flying in midair and he has the eternal Gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth, to every nation, tribe, language and people. To all those who were suffering and under the attack of Satan came this message, the eternal Gospel.

The term "Gospel" is nothing other than Jesus did it all. He lived in your place. He died in your place. It's not about what you do. It's about what he did. What he did cannot be overcome by the gates of hell. These were the words from Jesus' mouth himself. That doesn't mean the gates of hell aren't going to attack. So in every age, God sends these messengers to his people. These messengers to sharpen their focus and say "Listen to the eternal Gospel! There are all these other things that worry you and trouble you and frighten you and scare you. Listen to the eternal Gospel!" God's love for you in Christ is not in doubt. It is certain. Sharpen your focus by turning back to the eternal Gospel because the angel also comes with a message, "Fear God and give him glory because the hour of his judgment has come." It might be where I am in the sermon, or it might be in thousands of years, who knows. In our eyes, it could be now or it could be a long time. But he is telling us to always be ready for the hour of judgment because you don't know when your personal hour of judgment will come.

So are you clinging to faith alone, grace alone and Scripture alone, or are you clinging to your own idea? A lot of times we like to say we have the pure Gospel and we have this and that. We may have it, but my question to you is, do you always cling to it and do you always know it? Or do you rely more on what you've seen through the years instead of your own diligent search and study of the Scriptures? I have to believe that if we are really honest with ourselves, our theology, what we believe about God, is based more on what we observe than from our own study of God's Word. If it was never done before and it's done now, it must be wrong. Maybe it is. Maybe it isn't. But you have to go in the Word and find out.

If you want to be ready for the hour of judgment, set aside “this is what it’s always been” and say “what does Scripture say?” And then know what Scripture says. Lazy Christians are guided by their observations. Diligent Christians are guided by their study of God’s Word. That’s the Scriptural truth.

As we talked about this morning in class, the more that we are diligent in our study of Scripture, the more the Lord brings joy into our lives. Not happy, happy, giddy, giddy, I’m jumping up out of my seat because my team just scored a touch down. Not that kind of joy, but the kind of joy that sustains us even when a storm knocks out a whole junk of our country. When we face difficulty in our life that just shakes us to the core of our essence and we say “I don’t know how I can stand up let alone keep moving forward in my life,” even at those times, we have this underlying joy that our Lord loves us and he has taken away our sins, and he is with us. So you can either go through life and face all of life’s difficulties on your own saying “I’m going to handle it because I have this intestinal fortitude and I’m going to do it.” Or you can go through your life having the Lord’s strength and the Lord’s joy under pitting your very being. That comes through Word and Sacrament.

If you don’t want that, I feel sorry for you. There isn’t much else anyone can do for you. That’s what our Lord offers us when we listen to the eternal Gospel.

The words I read to you from [Revelation 14](#), they were preached as the funeral text for Martin Luther’s funeral. The preacher at the time applied those words of that angel to Martin Luther who brought the eternal Gospel back to the forefront for many people of his day. I believe that’s true.

I also believe that angel that flies in midair that has the eternal Gospel to proclaim is sitting right where you are. The Lord has given to you the Gospel. He has given to you the opportunity to grow in the Gospel, and he wants you to be his angel that proclaims the eternal Gospel to those who don’t know it, to those who do know it and need to be built up in it, and those of us who know it, know it well, but always need to be reminded of it. You have the opportunity to be that, not just to your family, not just to your friends, but the Lord will put in front of you many, many opportunities to point people back to Christ, or to Christ for the first time. You might not have wings like you think of with angels that are flying around, but you have the eternal Gospel, and you have the opportunity to be the messenger of the Lord and help focus other people on what really matters, to help give them confidence as they face challenges and difficulties that are ours from living in a sinful world. And you are the one that could make them ready for judgment. God will do it through you. Amen.