



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

December 1, 2013

Advent 1

Sermon Text: [Isaiah 2:1-5](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 2:1-5](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 18](#)

Second Lesson: [Romans 13:11-14](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 24:36-44](#)

Promises Made: *God's Kingdom is Coming*

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Promises are really nothing new. We make them all the time. Some of them we make with thought ahead of time. Some of them we make offhand, right? One of the kids said, "Can we have such and such for lunch?" You say, "Sure." If you forget by the time lunch comes around and you don't make that and make something else, then the kid is going to be upset, right? We make promises like that all the time.

The promises our God makes to us are not offhand promises that he forgets about. Our God makes his promises with great planning and forethought. Over the next weeks of Advent, that is one of the things we are going to see, these various promises that our God makes to us. We'll see them looking at the words of what some guys have called the fifth evangelist, the prophet Isaiah. We'll see some of these promises that God has made in the words that I read to you a little while ago. We're looking at the promise God made that his kingdom is coming. In reality, this text also tells us what our God expects his kingdom to be doing. When you look at it, you learn some amazing things that you might not always recognize.

Isaiah had a vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem, which stands for God's people... *"In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it."* The last days Scripture speaks of as the time after Christ has entered the world, after he has entered the world and then he ascends and returns again to heaven. We are living in the last days where the only event left that Scripture points to is Christ's second return, his second coming, one of the things we focus on in Advent.

When he talks about the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established, he isn't talking about God making a mountain that is taller than all the other mountains. It's symbolic language in this vision that God gave Isaiah. The mountain of the Lord is the Lord's temple where he dwells.

In the last days, where does the Lord dwell? Where does God live in the last days, the time after his return to heaven until he returns again? There's no temple or tabernacle that he lives in like he did in the Old Testament. What is the temple of the Lord, this mountain of the Lord's temple, that his higher than all the mountains and exalted above all the hills that all nations are going to stream to? Any idea? It's you. God is talking

about you here. He tells us that his church is where he lives. All believers everywhere. This is where God lives in the last days.

I thought it was one of the fascinating things that we looked at and studied in the House of the Lord study that we finished last week, two lessons ago. That's what we looked at. The House of the Lord in the New Testament era is the church.

The other thing I thought was fascinating that we looked at is in Revelation. Have you ever read it in Revelation where you see the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven? It's this new dwelling. It talks about streets of gold. It talks about gates of pearl. It talks about all these jewels and all these things. It has all these measurements and all that stuff. The fascinating thing we saw there is that the new Jerusalem was described as the bride of Christ. What is the bride of Christ in the New Testament? It's the holy Christian church.

Those streets of gold that it talks about in Revelation, that's you. Those gates of pearl and all those gemstones that are mentioned, the twelve different gemstones, that's you. I don't know about you, but I think it's kind of humbling to hear the Lord talk of us this way. He's talking about you as the mountain of the Lord's temple that is higher than all the other mountains, that other nations are going to stream to. He's talking about you as streets of gold, pure gold. I think that is fascinating that the Lord speaks of us with this honor. He says, "In the last days, my Word is going to go out. The message that the king is going to return, that Jesus is going to return to judge the living and the dead, is going to go out from my mountain to all nations so that nations will stream to me. Peoples will come to me. It will be higher than all the other mountains."

So what are the other mountains that God would be talking about there? I suppose it's all the other manmade religions, right? All the other manmade ways to be right with God... do good or be good. Or, worship this god or that god. Or, teaching about reincarnation, or all these other things. It says "Those things don't have the glory of my mountain because my mountain has the truth. Those mountains are all lies."

So here is what our God says for you. You, as the church, this is your work. You are to be the one that the Law goes out from, the Word of the Lord from Zion, from Jerusalem, that's you, so that God can judge between the nations, so he can settle disputes for many peoples. He is going to settle the dispute that exists between not just peoples but between people and God. The proclamation that there is peace in our Lord Jesus Christ is the message that is to come out from us. God's glory is revealed through us and from us. It is to go to all nations. All nations on the earth will stream to it.

We say, "But Christianity is fading in our country." Well, we're pretty myopic, aren't we? We forget the whole world is bigger than our country. Here we are, halfway around the world from physical Jerusalem, yet we are part of the church. We are part of God's people. The Word has gone out to the nations. Many have streamed to it, including us. God has brought us into his grace through the gift of his Son. He has taken away our

sins and given us eternal life. He has made us a part of his kingdom. He has made us a part of that holy mountain. Now he tells us we are the ones that are to be his voice so that others might know their sins are forgiven, so others might be ready because Christ can return at any time. We are to give them a message that is urgent and necessary and not replaceable. I don't care if the world around us says, "You believe what you want and we'll believe what we want, and that's all okay." Our Lord tells us there is only one way into heaven, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is it. If people that you know and love don't believe it, they're going to hell.

So our God says to us, "Understand the present times." Don't think it's someone else's job. Don't think "It sure would be nice if someone else would tell my loved one that Jesus lived and died for them." He's saying, "You are that mountain that the message is supposed to stream out from. If it doesn't, you are failing me. More importantly, you are hurting your relationship with me." If that relationship continues where you deny God and put yourself ahead of God, your wants and needs ahead of what God has told you to do, you are putting yourself in spiritual danger. That's why in Advent we have a constant call to repentance.

When we see the task the Lord has given us and we see our actions, we see we have failed. God doesn't make a list and check it twice and stick us with some coal. God says, "If you don't believe in Jesus, you're going to hell." So understand the present times... hell, not coal, hell is what is at stake.

If you have loved ones that don't know Christ, if you have people you don't know, that you don't love, that don't know Christ, God has called you to be the messenger so that his Law can go out because he's returning. We don't know when. That's what our other lessons told us today. So we should act as though we are dying people speaking to dying people and share urgently the only message that saves. That's what Advent is about. That's what focusing on preparing ourselves is about... to see that Jesus is the only answer and we are the ones he has called to be the answer givers.

"Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD." We walk in that light of the Lord as we share that light with a dying world that is living in darkness. Amen.