**Fainting With Fear**

**Luke 21:25-36**

Populus Zion – Advent 1

12.4.2022

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

*And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

Fainting with fear? Where? If we don’t do something soon, global warming will destroy the earth as the polar ice caps melt.

Fainting with fear? Where? Soon we are not going to be able to eat - $6.00 butter, $9.00 a pound for ground beef, $7.00 a pound for chicken breasts.

Fainting with fear? Where? We need to stop using fossil fuels.

Fainting with fear? Where? Did you pay attention to the storms that devastated the south this past week? Oh, my goodness, what is happening to the world? The end must be near!

Fainting with fear? Where? How many organizations advertise on TV about helping animals, how the animals are being abused?

Mind you, I agree that such treatment is despicable. We are to be the ones caring for all creation. But have you ever talked to some of those who are most zealous in the quest for animal rights? I had a woman declare to me that if she saw a small child and a dog drowning side by side, she’d save the dog. Her reason? It has more to offer to the world and will do less damage.

How many people are fainting with fear - terrified about the end of the world. Some are nominal Christians - those who bear the name of Christ, but really do not take the time to study the Scriptures and be fully educated in the Christian faith. They may have been confirmed, but they think they know what they need to know, and feel they do not truly need to study further. You see, in their eyes, the world has as much to say about truth as does Scripture - in fact maybe more so - the Scriptures are out of touch with the world.

Others have no interest in Christianity at all.

Either way, these folks see the things going on and jump to conclusions. These are those who Jesus claims in our text are, ‘fainting with fear.’

This is all very interesting. Yes, we are to be ready today for the end of the world as Christians. At any moment Christ could return, and all I can say to that is, “Come, Lord Jesus! Yea, quickly!” True Christian think it would be wonderful if it were to take place today or tomorrow. I’d love to exit this mortal frame of existence, have my body re-created in perfection, all those who have gone before us raised in perfection, and we enter the new creation in glory. No more pain! No more glasses! No more achy knees! No more stupidity! No more sinfulness!

As I mentioned a moment ago, what is most interesting is to consider who it is that is sounding the alarm of doom and gloom! Who is it that is fainting with fear that the end of the world is at hand!

I wonder if you have read the book of Jude? It is the second last book of the Bible. It is only one chapter. It is truly an easy read. Near the end of that short book are these words:

*But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh*

It was prophesied long ago that scoffers will come. They will be those who follow their own ungodly passions.

Those who cause divisions will be worldly people.

Those who cause divisions are ungodly people.

In the meantime, we, the beloved of God, are to continue building ourselves up in the most holy faith - praying in the Holy Spirit - keeping ourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

So dear friends, have you joined the world in fainting with fear? What is it that drives your daily lives? What is it that drives your faith life? What is it that drives your actions and doings in Christ’s Church?

Is it the truth of God? Or are you trying to be worldly people? How much do the things of this world and our contemporary cultural thinking drive what we want to be done, even in Christ’s Church? What is the focus of our congregational work? Is it the things of God in Christ Jesus - the saving Gospel and the people who need to hear it? How often is it fitting in with the world? Maybe even the outward appearance, making it look good, even to the extent of encouraging people not to talk about what we believe, teach, and confess - that might drive people away.

Is the purpose of the church to fill the pews and make sure the bills are paid? Or is the purpose of the Church to proclaim Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, for the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of souls?

Jesus claimed that many will be fainting with fear. He also declared in our text that those who do so will be the very ones who are engrossed with the things of the world.

Dearly beloved of God, what is the reason to be fainting with fear? There is nothing in this life that is not in God’s hands. This life has been taken care of for you. Christ knows your cares in this life. He knows your sorrows and He knows your pains - He too lived through them. His first Advent upon earth wasn't carefree and easy. Yes, some people followed Him and worshipped Him. Most of the people, detested Him. Ultimately, the majority won out, they spat upon Him and rejected Him. They had a mock trial and finally crucified Him.

There is something more to that story though. It is the most important fact of Christ's life. His life was a ransom for yours as was stated earlier. He died to forgive you, even for those times you were more engrossed with the things of the world, you were fainting with fear because you did not fully trust God with all your heart, mind, and soul, Christ continues to care for you.

Think of a baptism and what the family does that day. They celebrate! They rejoice! They may even enjoy a drink. It is a day we rejoice in the coming of God’s kingdom among you, you are reminded of God's care for ***YOU*** in this life! All the angels in heaven rejoice at a baptism – another child has been called by name, given the name of His God - Father, Son and Holy Ghost. God comes with water and His Word and claims another child as His own just, as He did at your baptism.

My friends, the cares of this life are that God cares for you. Even in your youth, you were important enough to God that He came to you personally and touched your life. Christ was present as the Word was spoken and water was applied, working a miracle of forgiveness, and bestowing faith through the water miracle of His baptism.

Your baptismal grace continues. Christ comes to you today in His Word as well. He speaks to you “I forgive you for ‘fainting with fear’ for getting weighed down with the desires of your flesh and cares of this world. I forgive you for forgetting me. I know how life in human flesh can be burdensome. I come to you to bring you joy – My joy! To continue to prepare you for My return.”

He comes to you in His Word, His body and His blood. He sets a table before you so that you might feast. At this meal He forgives sin, gives eternal life, and grants salvation.

We no longer faint with fear, fear is expelled. There’s a party going on right here, a celebration to last throughout the year. It is a conversation with God almighty in Christ Jesus. He speaks and you listen. You repeat back to Him what He has said to you. You sing songs of rejoicing that He has thrown a party in your honor. He has invited you to a party in His name. In this place, He sets a table with the finest fare - His body and blood. Your fainting fear in your heart is dispelled, the dwelling place of His Spirit is swept clean. He enters and dwells within you. As He fills you, the cares of this life vanish – fainting fears flee, for He points you ahead to the coming celebration eternal, a party without end.

Yes, God’s kingdom is coming! You are awake at all times! Christ comes to give you his strength in order that you might finally escape this life and stand before the Son of Man in eternal glory. Amen.