

23rd Sunday after Pentecost
“Patient endurance for Jesus’ sake in these last days”
Luke 21:17-19
November 16, 2025
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 23rd Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Luke 21:17-19.

“17 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. 18 But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 By your patience possess your souls.”

So far the text:

Our Gospel reading continues from last Sunday on Holy Tuesday during Holy Week, Jesus last days of teaching in the temple before He would be crucified. Last Sunday we heard how Jesus was confronted by the Saducees who did not believe in the resurrection. Jesus reminded them that God is the God of the living, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for they indeed are alive. And that those who are counted worthy to attain to that resurrection will no longer die anymore. They will be like the angels, confirmed in holiness, unable to sin, living forever in blessed happiness.

And how is one worthy to attain such glory? By one’s works? No, only through Jesus, who is the great I AM, who lovingly would give His life for all people to make us worthy by His righteousness...and prove that it was true by rising from the dead!

As our Old Testament reading from Malachi 4 prophesied, Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness. His righteousness shines brilliantly and is graciously given to all who believe in Him.

To Mary, Martha and Lazarus it was given through faith in Him. So that even though Lazarus died, 4 days in the tomb, Jesus showed His power over death by raising him to life.

So, Jesus had told Martha, consoling her at the death of her brother Lazarus.

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”

He who believes in Jesus, for Jesus’ sake, united with His death and resurrection, will live forever! Not a hair on a believer’s head is lost! “Though life be wrenched away, they cannot win the day. The kingdom’s hours forever!” So we sing in the final stanza of a “Mighty Fortress”.

So Jesus, the Good Shepherd said in John 10:

“27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” John 10:27-28

And so Jesus promised in John 3:16.

“16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

Believers in Christ will not perish eternally. No hair will be lost for they will be raised in a perfect glorified body!

“By your patience possess your souls.”

That’s what is at stake. Your soul and mine! Trusting in Jesus, enduring in the one true faith, you fight the good fight for your soul, possessing them with the enduring Word of God.

“33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”

And that is what is still ahead of all of us -the ending of heaven and earth as we know it in all is evil and corruption. Difficult days are ahead before the 2nd coming of the Son of Man!

A simple remark by one of the disciples, admiring the beautiful temple, spurred this conversation. How strong that physical temple looked! It was the place of worship for God’s people, to keep them strong in their faith, and looking for the 1st coming of the

Son of Man. The temple sacrifices were signs of the sacrifice of the final sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Remember the sign of the bronze serpent! So, Jesus must be raised up upon the cross. Remember the sign of Jonah. So Jesus must be in the earth 3 days and be raised again!

But God's covenant people had rejected Him. And they crucified Him. So, God's relationship with them ended and Jesus told them of a coming sign. Armies will surround Jerusalem and not one stone of the temple will be left on top of another. Complete destruction by the Roman army led by Vespasian and Titus in 70 AD.

“For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

Times of the Gentiles. For God's Word endures. For God loves all people. Though the Jews as a nation rejected Him, God grafted into His tree of life Gentiles...you and me by the gracious promises of His Word.

And that Word of God tells us of the coming of the Son of Man to make a new heavens and a new earth and raise up all believers in Him to eternal life! On these last Sundays of the church year, God's people are reminded that Jesus will come again!

As we wait, Jesus tells us that we must be patient and endure. There will be other signs in this world before Jesus comes that could cause us fear. Jesus tells us these details in the parallel reading in Matthew 24.

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.”

Wars, pestilences, Covid, sicknesses, and persecutions of God's people. If one goes to opendoors.org, there is a ranking of the 50 highest countries where Christians are being persecuted and murdered most in the world. North Korea, Somalia, Nigeria are some of the worst. Oh, how we must pray that God would keep them faithful with us to Jesus!

We have a gracious and patient God who knows our weaknesses and helps us in all our times of need. Do not fear, Jesus tells His disciples what you will say when you are persecuted. God will give you the words to be His witness to the world. The Reformation of Grace alone, Faith alone, Word alone through Christ alone continues through you and me!

“34 “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

The God of all comfort and hope has given us the means to endure! He has given us His Word and Sacraments! He has cleansed us from all our sin in our baptism and made us worthy to stand before the Son of Man when He comes in glory.

The God of all patience and comfort has given us His very body and blood to comfort our souls that though the world may be rioting, there is peace with God. Your soul is in His gracious hands. He gives you this last will and testament so that you may endure with all patience. Your sins are forgiven!

Paul says in Romans 15:

“4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. 5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

There is no need to fear when you see the signs around you that the end is near. For your day of redemption is drawing near. The day of the coming of Jesus is soon. Be patient and lift up your head in hope.

“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Nothing will be lost, not body, not soul, not a single hair on your head!

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 10:30-32

Come Lord Jesus! Come soon we pray!

Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)