

November 27, 2022

Jeremiah 33:14-16

HE WILL BRING . . .

“Fulfillment!”

Pilgrim Lutheran Church
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you look back over your life what do you see? No doubt there are moments and days that stand out, but not all moments and days are equal. Some soon fade away. There are those that you want to remember and relive, and there are others that you would much rather throw away and forget. A lot of days we classify as uneventful, unless we take to heart the words of Psalm 118, "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Every day is a day of promise, and promise fulfilled in Jesus, and a real reason to be joyful. Sad it is that we often allow sadness to rob us of our true joy.

In our Old Testament lesson, the prophet Jeremiah speaks to the people of Jerusalem about important days that will be coming in the future. "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah ..." And any promise that the Lord makes and brings to **Fulfillment!** is a wonderful thing. God is not a liar but a truth teller. Promises can be good. Good, fulfilled promises are even better! Lies are just horrible.

Someone once said: "Satan promises the best, but pays with the worst; He promises honor and pays with disgrace; He promises pleasure and pays with pain; He promises profit and pays with loss; He promises life and pays with death." Jesus says of the devil in John 8:44-45, "... He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." Like I said a moment ago, lies are just horrible. The lies of the evil one seem so good only to bring terror and death and damnation.

When Jeremiah recorded the words of the Lord, "the days are coming ... when I will fulfill my promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah," he was talking about the advent of Jesus Christ. In other words, the days have come and we are in this sanctuary looking back to the time when the Son of God became flesh and walked around in our world. Jesus came preaching the good news of God's kingdom, healing the sick and driving out demons, suffering and dying for our sins on the cross, rising on the third day, and ascending to the Father. Promises kept! Reasons to rejoice! Forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation! If we ever want to reminisce about the good ole days - those were the days!

Indeed! **Fulfillment!** They are the most important days that this world has ever seen. They are the centerpiece of human history. Paul puts it in this way, "... when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (Gal. 4)." Jeremiah pointed the people toward Jesus. But the people in the days of Jeremiah were not interested in those days. They were interested in their own days. You see they were busy testing and rebelling against the Lord so that the most important days of all were lost to them.

Yes. They were neglecting the promise of God and turning to their own vanity and selfish desires. Over and over again, God had sent to the people the truth of his word, calling them to repentance, pointing them to the coming days of the Savior. But they chose not to pay attention. Finally, in Jeremiah's generation, the patience of God had come to an end. God announced that he would bring the Babylonians to Jerusalem who would take them into exile. Now, to go into exile was a greater reminder that God will one day come and judge all humanity. God destroyed Jerusalem and the temple which was what the people had actually done to themselves in their testing and rejection of God.

It was right before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple when God spoke the words of our text. Jeremiah had announced to the people that a great destruction was coming. Jeremiah then pens the words of our lesson: “In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’” And what kind of reaction did Jeremiah receive? Most of the people despised him. It wasn’t long afterward that the city and temple were destroyed, and most of the people were led away in chains to a life of exile.

In all of this, God preserved for himself a remnant. There were those who believed and anticipated that they would one day return to Jerusalem and that the Savior would one day come. And the people did return to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple. And, roughly six hundred years later, God made “a righteous Branch” sprout from the line of King David whose name was Jesus of Nazareth. The Son of the living God took flesh and came into this world to conquer sin and death and hell. He has restored our lost relationship and has won for us an eternal victory.

The “days,” prophesied by Jeremiah, were Jesus’ days, and they are a tremendous source of comfort for those of us who look back at them through the eye witness testimony of the New Testament. Not only do we look back at them, but we live them in the voice of the gospel. The very death and resurrection of Jesus in Baptism is lived whenever we say “no” to sin and “yes” to what is right. We live in an ongoing promise that flows from the Upper Room whenever we receive the very body and blood of Christ. These are the days that should matter the most in our lives. We live in an everyday where we should rejoice in knowing that we have the forgiveness of sins and the hope of being with Jesus. When we look back over our lives, and consider any day, that day to be understood and interpreted according to God’s design for our salvation. All of our days in Jesus matter because Jesus’ day matters most in us by faith.

Now, throughout this sermon, we have been looking backward to the days of Jesus. We live him in the gospel and sacraments. Jesus brings **Fulfillment!** But, as we continue to behold Christ crucified, we are also in another day that is coming soon. In our gospel lesson, Jesus talks about another day that he calls “that day.” He says:

But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and *that day* come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

“That day,” as Jesus puts it, is still yet to come. And, if the promise of the first coming was fulfilled, then we can be rest assured that the second advent of our Lord will also come. We should live as if today is the day. And with that, we are forced to examine ourselves. Are we really ready for the sound of the trumpet? Where are you in your relationship with the only true God who will judge the living and the dead? Are you like the people who lived long ago in the days of Jeremiah and the exile? Are you despising God’s Word and the faith he gives by testing and rebellion? Have our hearts become like stone when it comes to faith and love? Or, are we currently among those who are the remnant? The next most important day in the history of the world is coming, and will chart what’s next for you through all eternity.

In the few moments or days that are left down here, set your hearts on Jesus and his forgiveness that any terror of meeting him may be cast out. Love casts out fear. Terror has to do with punishment, and whoever has such terror is in danger, or has even forgotten the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Your redemption is drawing near. Only be very careful that you are not found in unrepentance and without a living faith. May it be that you believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

A word of great encouragement for those who are found in him: **Fulfillment!** Because of his saving work for us in his first coming, when Jesus comes a second time, he will raise us up from the dead, and will give us eternal life and a place in his eternal kingdom. We, and all those who came before us in Christ Jesus, will rise and shine. Jeremiah will be there, and all those who listened and believed Jeremiah's words: "In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely." We are the New Testament Judah and Jerusalem. We will dwell securely in a the house of our God - all because of the Lord Jesus our righteousness! What a day that will be - saved - secure - our troubles will come to an end, no more tears, nor more pain, for the old way of things down here will finally come to an end.

Our Lord Jesus, our King, will establish justice and righteousness in and among us. That day is coming soon. Jesus promises us. What will you do with this promise? Make no mistake about it, he will bring it to **Fulfillment!** Stir up your power, O Lord, and come - Take us to our heavenly home! I leave you with the words of Jesus in our gospel lesson, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away (Luke 21:33)."

Amen.

Pastor Brock Abbott