



Near-sighted

SERMON NOTES DECEMBER 1, 2024

The First Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Luke 21:25-36

LUKE 21:25-36 (NRSV)

'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. 26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

29 Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; 30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'

34 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

"The certainty of Christ's second coming offers a message of promise, hope and redemption and not foreboding...in light of God's grace, even judgment is Good News!"

I. THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

25 'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. 26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

A. How does this passage help us to see the world as God sees the world...a view from "above" ...with God's purpose at the heart of all things?

B. Words like "Apocalypse" (revelation) and "Eschatology" (end times) have so often been employed to frighten and sensationalize...how can we reclaim them as expressions of our faith in God fulfilling God's promises?

C. Who is the "Son of Man" and what does he bring?

II. THE LESSON OF THE FIG TREE

29 Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; 30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

A. Jesus interprets these "signs" of God's in-breaking Kingdom through the Parable of the Fig Tree...how does this help us see the "forest for the trees"?

B. How do Jesus' words help us to understand our "perspective and place" amid a world that is often torn by crisis, tragedy and upheaval?

C. What is the Kingdom of God.... Where is it?

III. KEEP WATCH!

34 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

Jesus' warning makes the "how, when and where," of His return secondary to the certainty "that" He will return, and "why" the fulfillment of God's promise of redemption! Ours is to live faithfully, witnessing to God's saving activity for all people and all creation in Jesus Christ.

A. Although Jesus' words are not intended to alarm, they are a call to live in watchful anticipation of Jesus second-coming...how do we "stay on guard?"