

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Twenty-Second Sunday After Trinity, November 16, 2025

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 288, 237:1, 236, 293, 292:8-9.

Lessons: Jeremiah 18:1-11, Revelation 14:6-7, Luke 21:5-19.

Sermon Text: Mark 13:5-11.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

In Mark's Gospel we are already in the last week of Jesus' life on earth. He, as the Son of God, knew exactly what was going to happen. He knew what was coming in his life on earth and what was coming for all mankind.

Think of how he warned his disciples in that last week, especially in the upper room! We, too, must learn from Jesus' words and be warned against all who would take away our certainty in Jesus Christ. Be on your guard!

This chapter begins with Jesus' disciples looking at the magnificent temple building and the other buildings around it and marveling at their beauty. ***"As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!'"***

Although they had been following him for nearly three years, they had much to learn, just as every one of us can continue to learn from the Scriptures.

Man constructed the buildings they are looking at. Only the temple itself was built originally as a direct command from God. God gave detailed instructions in the time of Solomon when the temple was first built.

They were surely also looking at other buildings around them in addition to the temple.

Aren't these the kinds of things that we might see in a big city? We might marvel at the great architecture. We not only see great civic buildings – capital buildings, courthouses and other civic buildings. We also see other great buildings, including church buildings. And surely you have seen some grand churches and maybe even cathedrals. Many such buildings were built to glorify God, but they often manage to show praise for humans, too. Many people had a part in building such great church buildings which you can see today. The architects, the builders, the artisans, the craftsmen and even the people who donated for the building of the church, all had a part. In some cases we see, for example, stained glass windows that might memorialize individuals or groups of people and even the people who contributed for them may have their names on the windows! Many churches have name plates on fixtures in the building with the names of people who paid for them.

So it is not unusual for people to admire great buildings. But we must remember that such great buildings are the result of men's labors. However, Jesus tells his disciples that these buildings,

MEN'S WORKS DON'T LAST FOREVER

- 1. They will be destroyed.**
- 2. *"Watch out that no one deceives you!"***
- 3. You will be persecuted,**
- 4. But rely on the Holy Spirit!**

Jesus tells us that the magnificent buildings they are looking at won't last forever. ***"Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. 'Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.'"***

Men's work won't last forever. Even the "good deeds, the "good works" they have done won't last!

Jesus then begins talking about the destruction of Jerusalem. This actually took place about a generation later, in the year 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed the city and the temple. Although Scripture does not record

the destruction of Jerusalem, the secular historian Josephus described that time in Jewish history in about 150 pages, going into great and horrific detail.

And in the destruction of Jerusalem, we hear Jesus also talking about the end times, judgment day, when he will come and this world as we know it will be destroyed.

After his disciples ask ***“Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”*** Jesus answers with some very sharp, sincere warnings. He says ***‘Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many.’*** He tells us ***“You must be on your guard”***.

Last week you heard the warning to ***“Beware of false prophets.”*** Today Jesus gives us more warnings.

“Many will come in my name.” Well, we haven’t heard anyone tell us personally that he is the Messiah, or have we?

Haven’t we heard politicians tell us that they will make everything better for us, that they will save us from all the ills, the problems, the troubles facing us today?

There have actually been dozens of humans in the 20th and 21st centuries who have claimed to be God or Jesus Christ come back to earth. Among the names you may remember are David Koresh, leader of the Branch Davidians who died in 1993, Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Unification Church, who died in 2012, and Jim Jones, founder of the Peoples Temple, who died in 1978, leading hundreds of people to commit suicide.

Even if we haven’t personally heard anyone telling us he is Christ, many will come claiming to be ‘in Jesus’ name’ and will lead many people astray. False teachers – and last week you heard that not every false teacher stands in a pulpit – will lead many people to follow them unto eternal damnation, although many don’t think that will happen!

And then Jesus also gives some real-life examples of the turmoil, the difficulties people will have in the last days before he actually comes again.

Wars. There will be wars until the end of time, just as Jesus says here. Doesn’t that describe our times exactly? We need only listen to a few minutes of any world news report to realize that nation is fighting against nation.

But Jesus said ‘don’t be alarmed. Remember that God is guiding all things.’

Rumors of wars. Remember, the people to whom he was speaking didn’t have instant access to world-wide news like we do! So instead of hearing about the actual fighting and bombing and destruction that we learn about today as soon as it happens, they would hear of rumors of wars.

Earthquakes. Certainly there are and have been terrible earthquakes in parts of the world, killing hundreds and even thousands of people.

Famines. We have never experienced famines. But there are famines in the world – people dying of starvation, people suffering because of lack of clean water for drinking and even lack of rain to grow crops!

Things are going pretty smoothly for us today. Don’t we have enough to eat, even if we want different food? We may not always get to eat our most favorite foods, but we have sufficient food. Don’t we have an abundance of drinking water, and water for our livestock and for our crops? Oh, yes, we may experience drought conditions, but so far, each year, we have been blessed with crops and gardens to feed us.

Yes, we especially thank God for all that we have received. And, of course, we thank God especially for the Word of God in its truth and purity. I don’t have to warn you about purgatory. I don’t have to demand you pay to save yourself or anyone from the difficulties of purgatory. I don’t have to tell you to pay to get into heaven. What you do give for the support of the Gospel is a fruit of your faith.

And Jesus says this is just the beginning! Things can and will get worse. Famines lead to unrest, to rebellions, and to wars.

It is really also the beginnings of a new heaven and new earth that will eternally replace this wicked world we live in. It won’t be a world that men create by solving famine and poverty and crime and wars. For believers, this is the beginning leading to life in heaven. For unbelievers, it will be the beginning of punishment and destruction in hell much worse than they or we can imagine.

Jesus says we must still be on our guard. And then he tells us that his followers, his disciples will be persecuted. ***“On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.”*** You will be arrested and brought before councils, even local councils, as he says, in your own places of worship!

But ***“Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”***

Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, because we are his witnesses, we will be persecuted. We will be mocked for our faith in Jesus Christ and his Word, the Bible.

“You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.” “Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

He was talking to believers who have learned the Word of God.

When we are persecuted, the Holy Ghost will be with us. How? Well, we know that God has all power in heaven and on earth and that power was given to Jesus Christ. All power! By trusting in him, we know that he will guard and keep us. Remember the words of the Apostle Paul: ***“we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*** (Romans 8:28, NIV84)

The Holy Ghost will guide our speaking and our witnessing. And we will especially find all the more help from the Holy Spirit from the words of Scripture we have personally learned and memorized!

And through all the persecution and suffering for Christ we must remember this comfort: ***“He who stands firm to the end will be saved.”*** (Mark 13:13, NIV84) The blessing is that it doesn’t depend on us!

Jesus assures us that before the great day of judgement, ***“the gospel must first be preached to all nations.”*** And that has happened. We can think of the marvels of electronic media which have allowed the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be made available for all nations. We could start with the invention of movable type by Johann Gutenberg in 1455, up through the invention of the radio, television, the internet and all the ways we have of communicating today. Just as Martin Luther used the technology of his day, we, too, can use the technology of today to help us preach the Gospel to all nations.

The comfort and hope we have comes from the Holy Spirit, who caused the Scriptures to be written for our learning. We must rely on God the Holy Ghost and the Word of God he has caused to be written for our learning and comfort and hope.

O, Holy Ghost, guide our words! Amen.