**Signs of Redemption**

Based on [Luke 21:25-36](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk21.25-36)

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Second Sunday in Advent ~ *Populus Zion*

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Holy Scripture says that it is through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God. In today’s gospel, Jesus teaches us that suffering and trials will be sent by God as signs of the end of the world. These signs are useful to our faith, so that we can remind ourselves not to be weighed down by the cares of this life. We will always have troubles in this life. Only in the life of the world to come, will our troubles end. And that life will not come by our efforts, our government, our science or technology. That life will come only at a time appointed by the Father, when Jesus will come on clouds of glory. He will destroy heaven and earth, but his word will remain forever. And so will those who have remained in that word. They will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Jesus instructs his disciples about these last days, saying ***25 “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, 26 people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken….***

***32 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place….***

***34 “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. 35 For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth.***

God sends us sufferings and troubles in this world. These are to make complacent people anxious, and so they are given to us as signs. They are to remind us of the reality that this world--as it is--cannot be fixed and will not be fixed. There will be no world peace and universal brotherhood of man. There will be no eradication of poverty and disease. There will be no triumph of the church on earth to reform the world to christ, or to subdue all evil.

Jesus came first to disarm satan’s power to accuse us, and death’s power to sting us, that is all, and that’s enough. Since Christ’s resurrection and ascension there are and have been , wars and rumours of wars. There are still earthquakes, famines, which make those who are invested in the order of this world, preach even more strongly for less ethical restrictions on research, less outdated morals that would only cause more pain and suffering.

For instance, I don’t know the science about whether global warming is really happening or whether it’s man made. But I do know that the issue is of much greater consequence to those who believe in the redemption of the world by our efforts. If you believe the world will live or die by what we do here, then you will be much more anxious and alarmed about such things. But we who know Christ know that the world is coming to a fiery end any way. We believe we should take care of the earth, not because it is up to us to save the world...but because God has entrusted the earth to our stewardship until he comes again.

Those who believe that this world is perfectable come from an entirely different point of view. It is an eternally optimistic, and eternally disappointing point of view. It is optimistic because it preach that the world can redeem itself through human cooperation and social programs. It is disappointing because things will never really get better until Christ comes again to destroy this world and plant a new creation. This is frustrating news to someone who has faith in this life--to “this generation”, but to those who have faith in the life to come, the dissappointing news of the world are just so many signs that our redemption is drawing near.

An illustration, maybe you’ve owned something that is old and worn out. Think of an old car with a lot of miles on it. Some of the paint is coming off and it’s getting rusted. It would be silly to pay more than the car’s worth to restore the body. You take care of what you can on it to keep it going, but in the end, you know it’s not going to last forever anyway. You don’t put more hope in it than you know you can expect from it.

So with the world. We don’t put any more hope in it than it is capable of fulfilling. God could stop all troubles in our life, but he sends them to us as signs to remind us that this world is coming to an end. If our lives here were without troubles, we would be too comfortable and be caught off guard when it’s time, according to God’s time, to wrap up all history in one fell swoop. That would be cruel. But when troubles come our way, we are to remember from them not to trust in the world or anything in the world.

The world is passing away, but the word of the Lord will last forever. We can put our hope in it because it will never pass away. That is good use of our time here. Also love is a good use of our time in this irredeemable world. Jesus says we will always have the poor with us, but he also tells us to help the poor. Love does not help others in order to solve all of their problems, love is the paying forward of God’s love to us to others. This love is eternal and is the greatest of virtues.

Christ has come once in weakness, to offer himself as a payment that makes you right with God despite your sin. But at that time he did not remove suffering from us, nor did he promise to do so. He promised to give us a peaceful conscience. With such inner peace, we are equipped to meet all anxieties with confidence in the mercy and favor of God towards us. He promised us rest in our souls, but he promised a cross for our bodies. “Take up your cross and follow me”. “Love your enemies” Turn the other cheek. How can you do these things while having patience, peace, self control and other virtues? They are fruits of the Holy Spirit that abides in you and convinces you, if you do not give up, that you are christs and you are not working towards your redemption, but waiting for it in confidence.