

November 28, 2021
First Sunday in Advent
Luke 21:25-36

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be to your glory.
Amen

When I started to read the passages for this Sunday I took my blue Lutheran Study Bible. I look for the helps along the side of the pages to get my thought process going. Well guess what...nothing...not one word on these verses not one! Prayer, hope.

Then I read this verse again:

There will be signs “in the sun the moon and stars and on earth distress among the nations” Are we seeing signs now?

America has been in some kind of conflict or war 93% of the years of its existence. Yes really. There will be signs...World wide there has never been a year without natural disasters: fires raging throughout the western United States, Canada even northeastern Minnesota

Closer to home: 10 people die at a concert because people rushed the stage crushing those in front of them. Peaceful demonstrations becoming riots. Covid hospitalizing my husband for 7 days. Losing my sister-in-law Jeanne and then my brother Bob and then having my brother Darus diagnosed with cancer all in 3 weeks. There will be signs.

Wait aren't we in Advent? Where's our hope? Isn't that what Advent is all about? “There will be signs” actually are words of hope and reassurance.

We can't miss this sign Vs 27, then they will see “the Son of Man coming in a cloud” with power and glory. Can't you just imagine it!

Vs 28 “When these things begin to take place, stand up, raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” Can we see the signs?

Then Jesus tells the parable of the fig tree and all trees as they sprout in spring, telling us we may have to wait but spring is coming.

Honest I realize we are just starting winter but spring will come. And as those

trees bud remember so will our savor come. And that is hope.

Jesus is coming back! We as believers can look forward to the last day! Even with all the turmoil of the world Jesus will give us victory over sin, death and the power of the devil forever!

Could it be today, tomorrow....Only God knows.

As we are waiting, Jesus tells us to “Be on guard so that your heart will not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap.”

Jesus knows our struggles. What’s weighing you down? Where is your hope? Is it in a pipe dream? In the what if only’s, if only I had, if only I didn’t...you can fill it in with hundreds of things. All those worries...does it do any good to worry?

I have a question - who’s our worst enemy? Anyone? The devil yes! We can’t let the devil take over our hearts or minds.

A close second for me is myself. I have had all those worries and thoughts:

Does my work consume all of my time and energy?

Does going out with friends take my time away from Bible study or worship?

Does my love of sports take away from time at church?

I can go on and on...what about you?

I can’t let myself forget where my focus needs to be. My attention and hope needs to be on the eternal promises of our Savior.

This has been a hard year for me, for us. First covid hit us last November...we all got it, Brian and I were sick for 3 or 4 days but Herm just got sicker and sicker. I called the nurse hot line I had questions...Tylenol and get a pulse oximeter, check him regularly, call if more questions. When do I bring him in? Oxygen 78 heart rate way over 100, fever 101 do I bring him in now? The morning we took him in he couldn’t even stand by himself, we sat him on a dining room chair and pushed him to the door. He took 3 steps and was done...not able to even comprehend he needed to move his legs. Brian fireman carried him to the car. At the hospital I got a wheelchair and Brian picked him up like a baby to put him in it. I got him in the hospital and they asked if this was that patient they were waiting for...no...oh my another one! Name, date of birth, symptoms and he’s gone...whisked away....no goodbye...gone, I was ushered out the door. Hope - little. 90 minutes

later talking with Dr. Pretish to see what's going on. You know when they say if you see or hear something repeated more than three times it's really important...well in a 15 minute conversation she told me Herm was in very grave condition, he was a very very sick man at least 5 times. When she asked if they could restart his heart or hook him to a ventilator I was stunned. He came home 3 days later, he still wasn't well but people sicker than him needed the bed. Hope. A day and half later I ended up taking him back, he had a high fever and oxygen was at 76. I got to say goodbye this time. He was a little stronger now. Hope more. Prayer, lots, despair, yes, lots and lots of worry. Sleep, not so much. In those wee hours when you have no one to talk to, God is there he listens he comforts, he reassures. Sleep comes, hope comes. I know a lot of you were praying for him, for us, and let me tell you it worked. I could feel it. Thank you. Four days later Herm came home, better, a long way from recovered, that's taken almost a year. Hope.

This summer when Herms sister fell and broke her hip and passed away 7 days later, my brother Bob was diagnosed with end stage renal failure and died 17 days after Herms sister and among all that my younger brother Darus was diagnosed with esophagus and lung cancer. I had a calm that I can't explain. God has this. Now let me tell you this isn't the first time I have had to realize that I have had to give my problems and my life to the Lord, and it probably won't be the last but He will be with us all through this. Was it hard, yes, but there is hope and there is peace. I have hope.

The reason my brother Darus went to the doctor in the first place was that he was having trouble swallowing. He's had some chemo now. My oldest brother stopped to see him a few weeks ago and said he had gained 10 pounds between treatments he was looking good. Darus had a coughing spell, a really bad spell and he finally coughed up something. No telling what it was but he could swallow after that. Hope, thank you God.

I found this message on Facebook, a friend had posted it.

Hope by Nikki Banas

If you only carry one thing through out your entire life, let it be hope. Let it be hope that better things are always ahead. Let it be hope that you can get through even the toughest of times. Let it be hope that you are stronger than any challenge that comes your way. Let it be hope that you are exactly where you are meant to be right now, and that you are on the path to where you are meant to be....Because during these times, hope will be the very thing that carries you through.

Advent...Hope

Jesus understands being weighed down, He was weighed down by our sins, yours and mine. Jesus is our rock of solid hope. Jesus is our unflinching, unblinking Savior. Jesus is coming again. We don't need to be worried about what's happening or what's going to happen. We need to stand up, raise our heads and be ready, our redemption is near!

Jesus came the first time to be our brother and bearer of our sin. As we live in this temporary world we have a sure and certain HOPE in the heaven that awaits us. Jesus hasn't left us, He's given us this world!

When things like guilt and the weight of sin seem to crush your heart, your sins are forgiven. Everything has been fulfilled in Christ. Your hope, my hope is not an impossibility. Hope is a person that was once dead, alive again and coming back for you and for me!

So watch with undivided attention to the signs all around you. Watch with joy, lift up your heads. Keep your focus on Jesus because your redemption is drawing near.

Come Lord Jesus in grace, in power and in glory.
Amen Amen