

ONE ADVENT 11-28-21

JEREMIAH 33:14-16; PSALM 25:1-9; 1 THESSALONIANS 3:9-13

LUKE 21:25-36

GOOD MORNING

TODAY'S CENTRAL THEMES SEEM TO BE TELLING US TO PREPARE AND THEN A REVELATION TYPE READING FROM LUKE.

JEREMIAH HAS TO BE ONE OF THE SADDEST PROPHETS OF ANY AGE OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE. HIS MESSAGE COULD BE SUMMARIZED IN ONE WORD - DISASTER. BUT IN THE PASSAGE WE JUST HEARD, RIGHT SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF JEREMIAH, THERE ARE WORDS OF HOPE, PROMISES OF RESTORATION. THE PROMISE MADE AGES BEFORE TO ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB, TO MOSES AND DAVID, WOULD BE FULFILLED. INSTEAD OF THE PITEOUS EXCUSES OF LEADERS LIKE MANASSEH AND ZEDEKIAH, GOD WOULD RAISE UP THE RIGHTEOUS BRANCH FROM THE HOUSE OF DAVID, ONE WHO WOULD ACT IN EVERY WAY JUSTILY, ONE WHO WOULD SAVE ALL. WE

BEGIN ADVENT BY PROCLAIMING TO THE WHOLE WORLD THAT THIS RIGHTEOUS BRANCH IS JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, WHO SAVED US THROUGH HIS PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION, AND OFFERS TO US A SHARE IN THE VERY LIFE OF GOD THROUGH THE SACRAMENTS OF HIS CHURCH. THIS IS A FORETELLING OF THE COMING OF THE KING OF KINGS.

IT IS HARD TO STAND ON YOUR TIPTOES FOR OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS WAITING IN EAGER EXPECTATION FOR CHRIST TO RETURN, AS WE STRETCH THE HEAD AND CRANE THE NECK STANDING AT THE EDGE OF ETERNITY.

ST. BERNARD SPEAKS OF THE THREE COMINGS OF THE LORD. THE FIRST AND THE LAST ARE VISIBLE, AND THE MIDDLE ONE IS INVISIBLE.

CHRISTMAS IS THE FIRST COMING AND THE SECOND COMING IS CHRIST'S RETURN IN GLORY AND MAJESTY AT THE END OF THE WORLD WHICH WE HEAR ABOUT IN TODAY'S GOSPEL. THE MIDDLE COMING BERNARD DESCRIBES, IS "IN SPIRIT

AND POWER,” EACH DAY OF OUR LIFE. IT IS “LIKE A ROAD WE TRAVEL FROM THE FIRST COMING TO THE LAST.”

THIS IS CHRIST BREAKING THROUGH TIME AND SPACE TO BE PRESENT IN OUR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF OTHER AS WE EXPERIENCE IN THE SACRAMENTS, WHERE WE ALREADY RECEIVE A FORETASTE OF ETERNAL LIFE, WHILE “AWAITING IN BLESSED HOPE, THE APPEARING IN GLORY OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR CHRIST JESUS.” (TITUS 2:13)

IN THIS PRESENT MIDDLE COMING OF CHRIST: WORK FOR PEACE NOW, HELP THE HOMELESS NOW. THIS HELPS US TO GREATE A FAVORABLE FUTURE FOR US AND OTHERS. DOING WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN PROVIDES LOTS OF SATISFACTION. ACTING CONTRARY TO YOUR BELIEFS IS TYPICALLY UNSUCCESSFUL AND LEADS TO INCREASED ANXIETY.

AS BENJAMIN E. MAYS, A CIVIL RIGHTS PIONEER, SAID IN A POEM: “I’VE ONLY JUST A MINUTE. ONLY SIXTY SECONDS IN IT. FORCED UPON ME, CAN’T REFUSE IT, DIDN’T SEEK IT, DIDN’T CHOOSE IT. BUT IT’S UP TO ME TO USE IT. I MUST

SUFFER IF I LOSE IT. GIVE AND ACCOUNT IF I ABUSE IT, JUST A TINY LITTLE MINUTE, BUT ETERNITY IS IN IT.

IT IS THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST THAT ADVENT BEGINS “THE DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD” WE HEARD IN OUR FIRST READING. “THE DAYS ARE COMING” – IS MENTIONED SIXTEEN TIMES BY JEREMIAH.

IN MY YOUTH MOST OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH CAME THROUG AS CATECHISM LESSONS. IN DOING ALITTLE RESEARCH IT SAID: “THAT SINCE THE ASCENSION, CHRISTS’S COMING IS GLORY HAS VEEN IMMINENT (673)” WHICH MEANS LIKELY TO HAPPEN SOON; EVERYTHING NOW IS PROVISIONAL. EVERYTHING CAN END WITHOUT NOTICE, SO BE ALWAYS VIGILANT.

OUR GOSPEL SAYS: “BUT WHEN THESE SIGNS BEGIN TO HAPPEN, STAND ERECT AND RAISE YOUR HEADS BECAUSE YOUR REDEMPTION IS AT HAND.”

IT’S HARD TO STAND ON YOUR TIPTOES FOR OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS WAITING IN EAGER EXPECTATION FOR CHRIST TO RETURN...WE ARE STANDING ON THE EDGE OF ETERNITY. YOU CAN GET TIRED! IN THE EARLY CHURCH,

WHEN ST PAUL SAID THAT JESUS' RETURN WOULD BE IMMINENT, "LIKE A THEIF IN THE NIGHT," PEOPLE SAT AROUND WAITING FOR IT TO HAPPEN AND BECAME BUSYBODIES WATCHING OTHER PEOPLE WORK INSTEAD OF THEMSELVES DOING WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING. ST JEROME DESCRIBES SOME OF THEM AS GOSSIPERS, CARING FOR NOTHING BUT THEIR LOWEST APPETITES, GIVEN TO "WINE AND WATONNESS."

AND OUR GOSPEL SPEAKS OF THE EDUCATION OF DESIRE FROM LOW APPETITES TO ETERNALLY PEACEFUL ONE AND EXPANDING OUR HOPE – "BEWARE THAT YOUR HEARTS DO NOT BECOME DROWSY FROM CAROUSING AND DRUNKENNESS AND THE ANXIETIES OF DAILY LIFE, AND THAT DAY CATCH YOU BY SURPRISE LIKE A TRAP. DON'T FALL ASLEEP IN YOUR FAITH.

GOD'S LOVE FOR US AND ITS LOGIC VASTLY OUT OF PROPORTIONS, "MORE THAN WE CAN ASK OR IMAGINE" (EPHESIANS 3:20), STAYING VIGILANT IS ETERNALLY WORTH IT.

IN THE BOOK TITLED STANDING ON PROMISES, LEWIS SMEDES SAYS “THAT HOPING FOR OTHERS IS HARD, BUT NOT THE HARDEST. PRAYING FOR OTHERS IS HARD, BUT NOT THE HARDEST. THE HARDEST PART FOR PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST IS IN “LIVING THE SORT OF LIFE THAT MAKES PEOPLE SAY “AH, SO THAT’S HOW PEOPLE ARE GOING TO LIVE WHEN RIGHTEOUSNESS TAKES OVER OUR WORLD.”

AMEN