

Christ the King Sunday

November 25, 2018

Our Savior's Way
Worshipping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM
Pastor Mann

Well, as I look around this morning, I guess we are the survivors. You've survived Black Friday for another year. You know what Black Friday is, don't you?—It's the day after Thanksgiving. Traditionally Black Friday is the first day of the Christmas shopping season. So, finish up your Thanksgiving leftovers and gather all your stuff together for the next big holiday—Christmas—just one month from today!

Do you know how Black Friday got its name? It comes from the 60's. The Philadelphia Police Department—the Friday after Thanksgiving. They saw all the traffic and crowds in the malls and shoplifting and fights between shoppers in the stores. It was in Philadelphia—"The City of Brotherly Love"—not. The Friday after Thanksgiving was named Black Friday. And you have survived it for another year!

In our Gospel for today, Jesus warns us that another Black Friday is coming. Jesus says, "In that day", following that distress, "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken." "In that day"—these are prophetic words. Jesus is quoting the Old Testament prophets. "In that day" means the Day of the Lord—the day of Christ's return—Judgment Day. We don't talk a lot about Judgment Day, but it is an essential part of our faith. In the Apostles' Creed, we confess: "We believe in Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father almighty. FROM

THENCE HE WILL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.” That’s Judgment Day—the end of the world when Christ returns as judge and king. You can’t really forget about it, because it is right up there in the stained glass window every week—Jesus in all his glory—wearing a crown—not a crown of thorns. He’s holding the thorns in his hands. It’s not a picture of Easter. This is a picture of Jesus Christ the King, returning in all his glory to judge all the people of the earth.

And I can’t help but ask, “What will Jesus find when he comes? What will his judgment be on this earth? What will God say about the world we live in? And even more important, how will the King of kings and Lord of lords judge my life and your life?” Last Sunday, Pastor Labuhn preached on the first half of Mark chapter 13, where Jesus says, “This beautiful temple will not stand forever. One day it will be destroyed.” As I listened to the sermon, Jesus’ words touched my heart. I had spent the previous week packing up my mother for her move to Lynchburg. She is now living just ½ mile from my sister. But here is a picture of the home where my mother and father have lived for the last 20 years. This is the view from their back deck. I thought their life there would never end. But it did. And I wasn’t ready for that.

It is the night before the crucifixion. The world is about to change. Jesus wants His disciples to be ready. The words in our gospel are Jesus’ words of love and care for His closest disciples. But Jesus is also talking to us. Jesus is saying, “The world as you know it—life as you know it—will not stay the same forever. It will change. Your life, one day, will end. The world, one day, will end. Be ready for that!” Jesus says, “I love you. You’re in my hands. I’m giving my life for you. You don’t have to be afraid. Just, be ready!”

So, how do you get ready? As I think about the last week I spent with my Mom packing up her belongings, I think I made a mistake. I should have started encouraging her, a long time ago, to get rid of some of her stuff. I never thought of my Mom and Dad as hoarders, but after spending a week packing it all up—let’s just say my opinion has modified. And then I came home and looked at my

own house and my own stuff. We've lived in our house for 25 years. And I'm about one dead cat away from being a certified hoarder. But that's what we do in this world, don't we?—we collect stuff, we buy houses and rent storage units where we can put our stuff, and we build up bank accounts and investment portfolios. But Jesus comes to us this morning and says, "Don't be naïve. One day, like the Temple in Jerusalem, it will all be torn down. It will all be taken away." Jesus says, "Do not store up for yourselves with treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)

But I am getting ahead of myself. This is not how we get ready. We do not get ready by thinking about the stuff. That's what the world does—over at Home Depot and in all the stores—Halloween stuff, Thanksgiving stuff, Christmas stuff. Don't start with stuff. I've had enough stuff and I've had enough stuffing. Instead, start getting ready, first, by looking up at that stained glass window and thinking about the One who is coming again—Jesus. What is your relationship with Jesus, today? Have you given your life to Him? Have you confessed your sins to Him? Are you building an eternal relationship with the King of kings? This is number one—how does it stand between you and Jesus?

Second, I need to ask myself, "Am I growing in my relationship with my King Jesus. Is my relationship with Jesus today any stronger than it was a year ago?" Because, my friends, this life isn't about the accumulation of stuff. This life is about allowing the awesome power of God, through His Holy Spirit, to transform us and remake us and open us up to living the kind of life that God has prepared for us. That happens through worship and Bible study and prayer and fellowship and all the other spiritual disciplines, including giving. This is how we come to know the King of kings.

Finally, I need to ask myself, "Am I doing what God put me on this earth to do?" On the night before He was crucified, Jesus took a towel and a basin of water and washed his disciples' feet. When

he finished, Jesus said, “As I have washed your feet, so you should wash one another’s feet.” Jesus wasn’t talking about dirty feet. He was talking about living a life of service. Am I, are you, living a life of service? When we serve others, the Spirit of Christ lives through us as we give ourselves in sacrificial, humbling love—which is exactly what Jesus did.

My Aunt Ardis from Florida told me this story. She grew up in the south and an elderly African American woman named Suzie used to work for the family. Suzie didn’t drive, so my aunt was assigned to give Suzie a ride both to and from work. Every day, at the end of the day, my aunt would ask, “Suzie, are you ready to go.” And Suzie’s reply was always the same, “I stay’s ready to keep from havin’ to get ready.” May we be wise. May our relationship with Jesus be strong. May our faith be always growing. And may we live to love and serve others.