

Sermon - Nov. 23rd, 2024 - Last Sunday in the Church Year

Confirmation of Dalton Morrison - Reception of the Morrison family and Lexy Knop into membership at Trinity Manilla, IA

Text: Mark 13:24-37

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

## LOOKING FORWARD TO ETERNITY

On this day the Church celebrates the last Sunday in the Church year where we look at the End Times. Mark 13 describes the passing of time and the judgment upon Jerusalem such that a new era begins in which the glory of God is no longer concentrated at the Temple, but in Jesus who accomplishes the final victory. On this side of the Last Day, each of us now waits patiently with hope. Our new members and our confirmand now join this congregation as we wait and hope together in fellowship with one another until we finally end our days here or until The Lord meets us when He comes again.

What will the coming of the Lord look like? Well Jesus tells us exactly what will take place in our Gospel reading from Mark 13, **“in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.”** This is reminiscent of the prophet Joel who speaks of the changes in heavenly bodies as the intervention of God in history. Joel 2:10-11 says, **“The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The Lord utters His voice before His army, for His camp is exceedingly great; he who executes His word is powerful. For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?”** So all the these changes

even if the whole world were in total uproar, we would still know that the Lord is in charge. Indeed, He would be the only one in charge as our lives would be flipped upside down and inside out.

Today you witnessed Lexy, Dalton, and Andrea make a bold confession that they would rely on the Lord and remain steadfast even if it meant death rather than to fall away from this faith. Today, they renounced the devil and all his works and all his ways in exchange for confessing their faith in the God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

So we all now wait and watch and look forward to eternity. The natural disasters and the signs which are spoken of concerning the end times, Jesus pairs this with a description of the Son of Man and with a parable about a fig tree, **“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send out the angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that He is near, at the very gates.’”**

When the whole Earth gives out and there are pestilences, when there are solar flares, when there are eclipses of the moon, when there are periods without rain, or if your community were flooded with water, we are told that these things are signs like the sign of the fig tree. They are signs that the Son of Man is at the door. He is not coming today, but all these signs should be a reminder to us that we should double down and take our faith more seriously.

During the height and fear of the Covid 19 pandemic, families were forced to stay together and quarantine. Many began to pray again. Some sought after the truth with renewed effort. Others found a Church that they could attend. The signs of the coming of the end of the age means that we should be should remember that death is near to us all and that eternity is ever drawing closer.

Yet, there is one take away, I'd like you all to remember, **Jesus says, "Heaven and Earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away."** Though the Earth or your whole life or your whole reality seems like it is out of control, then know that those things do not last. Only the Word of the Lord will remain.

New members and old alike, look forward to eternity, hold fast to this faith always and cling to the Word of the Lord that will remain forever. Amen.