

9 November 2016  
Pentecost 25 Midweek

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church  
Greenspring Village, Springfield, VA

Jesu Juva

“It’s Not Over ’til Jesus Says It’s Over”  
Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8, 13-17; Luke 20:27-40

No matter how the election turned out last night, half of America was going to wake up this morning disappointed. And fearful. Much apocalyptic language has been thrown around by both sides, that if the wrong person gets elected, that’s going to be the end.

No, it’s not.

The sun still came up this morning. Rain watered the earth. The stars are still in the sky and the planets are still orbiting the sun. The end of the world will come by the decision of only one: God. And what a comfort that is. That whether we make wise decisions or foolish ones, whether we get things right or wrong, the future is not in our hands, but in His.

That doesn’t mean that things will be easy. We heard in the reading from Thessalonians of rebellion and lawlessness, of idolatry and destruction. For we live in a world of sin and these are the things of sin, what sin does. And they will always be with us.

But we heard tonight also that God is restraining all this. It may not always seem like it. It may seem like sin is running amok in our world. But it could be worse. And it would be worse, if God were not restraining the evil one. Luther once said that satan would have this world destroyed in an instant were God not holding him back and preserving His creation. So as bad as things might seem to get, there is a limit set by our Father in heaven. Evil can only go so far, and no further.

And while we may wonder why God allows evil to exist in our world at all, Jesus has told us why: to uproot evil now would be to uproot the wheat with the weeds, the good plants with the bad (Matthew 13:24-30). But it is not yet time for that, for the harvest. So for now, both grow together. But we have this assurance, too: that God is using all things for the good of His children and the good of His Church (Romans 8:28). Yes, even evil. Maybe to wake us from our sleepy laziness and being content with the status quo, perhaps to strengthen our faith by driving us back to the Word of God and prayer which we have neglected, or to discipline us.

What we need God will do. His love will allow Him to do no less. And if you ever doubt that, you need look no further than the cross. There God did what we needed the most, in the person of His own dear Son. To be the sacrifice for our sin - for our rebellion and

lawlessness, our idolatry and destruction - and die for it. Pay the price for it. Be crushed by the evil of it and God's wrath against it. And then emerge victorious over it in His resurrection. And while the disciples woke up the next day, like many did today, dissatisfied and fearful, the morning after that revealed the victory of God. Evil had its day, but good has eternity.

But that's only half the story, half of America. There's another half who woke up this morning with an opposite error, equally as dangerous: that now with the right person elected, everything is going to be good, our future is secure, and our dreams will come true. And the language is almost that of salvation.

Again, no.

The problems and sins that plagued us yesterday - in our world and in our hearts - are still with us. They may even get worse. Our next president will be a sinner, as was the one before, and the one before that, and so on. We already have a Saviour - we don't need, and shouldn't look for, another one.

In fact, we have more than a Saviour - He is the Bridegroom to His Bride, the Church. For Jesus didn't just come to do something for us, give something to us, or improve our lot in life, but to make us His own, to unite us to Himself as one flesh in a union that not even death can end.

That's why Jesus had to correct the Sadducees' question about marriage. It wasn't even an honest question because the Sadducees didn't believe in a resurrection. They were trying to ask Jesus a "Gotcha!" question. So Jesus turns their question around - it's not the resurrection that is wrong and that marriage will endure, it's marriage that will change and a new, resurrection life that will endure. For marriage as we know it is for the benefit of our life here and now. But in the next life it will be different. It will be better. There will be no marriages that are childless and end in death, and no widows that mourn. We are children of God, born again and from above in Holy Baptism, to a life with our heavenly Bridegroom that will never end.

So today no doubt you heard the phrase: the voters have spoken. Indeed they have. You have. Your vote has been counted and new people elected. But long before men spoke, God spoke. His Word brought this world into being, His Word continues to give life, and it is His Word that will end all things. The *breath of His mouth*, as we heard, will bring it all to an end.

But before then, the breath of His mouth is giving life. His Spirit, breathed out into the world, calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His truth, and sanctifies us in our Lord Jesus Christ. That when we despair, we have hope. That when we put our trust in the people or things of this world, we repent. That when we sin, we hear His Word of

forgiveness. So that when we die, we then hear His Word calling us from the grave to life everlasting.

Until then, as Paul said: *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.* Until then, we have good works to do and good words to speak. And we do so not to gain a future, but because our future is secure. For since our future is secure, we can do as Jesus did for us - lay down our lives for others in love and service. We already have what we need. Now we can give others what they need. Especially the love, mercy, and forgiveness of Christ.

So the latest “most important election of all time” is over. Finally. Until the next one. So as Paul reminded the Thessalonians, *do not be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed,* whatever happens and whatever you hear. God chose you in His Son Jesus Christ. And *He is not God of the dead, but of the living.* That’s you. For you live to Him now, and you will live in Him forever.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.