

In Nomine Jesu

1st Sunday in Advent

November 29, 2009

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Hecla, SD

Text: Romans 13:11-14 - *11) And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12) The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13) Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissensions and jealousy. 14) Rather, clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

Theme: The Advent of Our Salvation

- Dawn is breaking
- Wake up
- Get dressed

Dear fellow redeemed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who anxiously await His return,

Well it is nearly here. The colored lights, cool temperatures, shorter days, longer nights, and Black Friday all serve as reminders that Christmas is almost here. Few, if any of us are ready for Christmas. Today we will be putting up Christmas decorations at church. Maybe some of you have already done that at your homes. Yet I would guess that there are many things you need to get done in the next 27 days. We are excited for Christmas to come, but we realize we need the time between now and then to get things done.

Are there things we need to get done before Jesus returns? Today we begin the season of Advent. The word "advent" itself means, "*The coming or arrival, especially of something extremely important.*" (dictionary.com) The Old Testament believers eagerly awaited the advent, the coming of the promised Messiah. For four thousand years the LORD God had been promising to send a Savior. At Christmas we mark the fulfillment of those promises with the first advent of Christ. But God does not want our faith to be one that is merely looking back. We too await the advent of Christ - we are to be alert and eagerly awaiting His second advent. So let us this morning further prepare ourselves for the advent of our salvation. The dawn of our salvation is breaking, let us wake up, and get dressed, ready for the second coming of our King! May God the Holy Spirit prepare our hearts and minds by His holy Word! Amen.

DAWN IS BREAKING

Getting kids out of bed in the morning can be rather challenging - especially if it is a teenager or a child who is not a morning person. Often times Mom has to come in two or three times to wake them up. I imagine this is typical in each one of our homes. Except, that is, for one morning out of the year. There is one morning where the kids may actually beat Mom and Dad out of bed and are trying to get them up. That morning is Christmas morning. On that day children are so excited that they can't wait for morning to come, so they can get up and open

their presents.

As exciting as the dawn of Christmas Day is for Christians, there is a Day that is even more exciting to us. A Day which is already dawning. The eastern sky is growing brighter and brighter with each passing moment. On that Day all sadness will end for the believer in Christ. On that Day there will be no more death and no more crying for the Christians. On that Day we will finally get to see the face of our Savior Jesus. On that Day Jesus will return in all His glory and every eye will see Him. On that Day the King of kings will come on His throne with His holy angels. On that Day Christ Jesus will welcome me and all believers to the Paradise which He has prepared for us.

The dawn of our salvation is breaking even now. Paul writes in our text, ***“Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.”*** “Our salvation,” which Paul mentions here is our salvation from this mortal life and this sinful world. It is being taken from this veil of tears to Jesus’ side in heaven. It is being saved from the world of war, disease, sorrow, and suffering. It is Jesus taking us to be with Him in paradise. This day could come in one of two ways. One way is by death, when our bodies die and our souls are taken to His side in heaven. Another way is at the 2nd advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, Judgment Day. On that day Christ will return to take us to be with Him. Either way, the time is not of our choosing. ***“My times are in Your hand,”*** King David wrote. (Psalm 31:15) Our time of grace on this earth is in God’s hands.

Therefore know this, the night of this world of sin and death is nearly over. The day of Jesus’ return is nearly here. The dawn of our salvation is breaking.

WAKE UP!

One of the traditions of Thanksgiving Day is the post-meal nap. Our bodies get tired as they try to digest all the food that was eaten. Sometimes we refer to people who are napping or sleeping as being “dead to the world.” And that is a pretty accurate picture of what sleep is like. When we are sleeping we have no concept of what is going on around us. It may snow while we are sleeping and we wouldn’t know it. The basement could flood while we are sleeping and we won’t know it.

With the dawn of our salvation breaking on the horizon, Paul advises us ***“The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber.”*** Sleep is important. It recharges our bodies. But there are circumstances where sleep could also be dangerous. If you fall asleep while driving you could kill yourself or someone else on the road. It is even more dangerous for a Christian to be spiritually slumbering. When we are spiritually sleepy we are not alert to what is going on around us. We are not paying attention to the road ahead of us. We wander into things that are spiritually dangerous and harmful to our faith. We allow the world to draw us away from Christ and His Word. Because the advent of our salvation is nearer than we first thought, it is time for us to wake up!

In our Gospel reading we heard Jesus tell us that when He returns it will be very similar to the days of Noah and the flood. ***“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away.”*** (Matthew 24:37f) In the days of Noah, unbelievers were clueless about the impending danger. They carried on with business as usual. That they knew nothing about what would happen was evident by their actions. They

were feasting and marrying, totally clueless that the flood waters that would destroy them would soon be arriving.

Are things any different today? Are people living their lives as though Jesus could come at any moment to judge them? The unbelieving world is basically sleepwalking through life. They know nothing about what is about to happen. This too is evident by their actions. Those “deeds of darkness” as Paul calls them. They aren't living as though Christ could return at any moment. Instead they enjoy their orgies and their drinking binges. Their sexual escapades and excesses. Their dissensions or strife and jealousy. Certainly not a full list of the deeds of darkness, but sufficient for Paul's purposes here. If they knew Christ were soon returning, at any moment - would they be living in such a way?

But God in His grace has brought out of that darkness and into His marvelous light. We recognize those deeds for what they are - darkness and of the devil. We believe that the Son of God came to rescue us from the eternal darkness of hell. True God became true Man to redeem us from the curse of the Law by Himself becoming a curse for us. By faith we know Jesus earned our salvation by giving His life as a sacrifice for our sins. By faith we know that Jesus' resurrection from the dead means that we too will live. By faith we believe the promise of Jesus that He is coming soon to take us to be with Himself in heaven. The advent salvation is near. Dawn is breaking. Wake up! Wipe the sleep from your eyes and let us live our lives looking for His return.

GET DRESSED!

? - There once was a time when people thought it was the height of embarrassment to be seen in your pajamas. If wives left the bedroom wearing their pajamas they would often have what was called a “housecoat” to cover their bedtime clothes. I even heard of one man's grandfather who used to get up in the morning, put on his suit and tie just to go outside and get the newspaper. Those days are long gone. Now it is not uncommon to see people shopping and going to school in their pajamas. - ?

Since we know our Lord Jesus Christ is returning soon, how should we live? Well, we might compare it to our pajamas verses our work clothes. We would never think of wearing our pajamas to the office. Likewise we would never wear a suit and tie or a dress to bed at night. By bringing us to faith God has called us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light. In our baptism we were baptized into Christ. In our baptism we were buried with Christ and raised to life with Christ. Believers in Christ are now children of light. And what Paul writes of here is much, much more than pajamas and work clothes. ***“So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”*** Understanding the present time, let us get dressed.

Paul says to put aside those deeds of darkness. Personal experience tells us that more acts of wickedness are done under the cover of darkness rather than in broad daylight. Man thinks like Adam and Eve, that we can hide our sin from God under the cover of darkness. Those deeds of darkness, those things that are done which we'd be ashamed of if other people found out about, Paul says to put them aside.

Instead, put on the armor of light! Elsewhere in Paul's letters he talks about the armor that God supplies to us. You see, Christ has defeated our enemy. He conquered death by rising from it Easter morning. That battle has been won. But the old evil foe, madly seeks our overthrow. For this reason God has given us the weaponry to defend ourselves. (Eph 6:13f) He has given us "the girdle of truth, breastplate of righteousness, gospel shoes, shield of faith,

helmet of salvation, sword of the Word." (Lenski 805) Through His Word and Sacraments God gives us the protection we need - the armor of light - to defend ourselves.

To further emphasize getting dressed in preparation for Christ return, Paul writes in the last verse of our text, "***Clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.***" Paul uses the same verb with the Lord Jesus Christ as he does with the armor of light to draw a parallel - put on the armor of light, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. What an amazing thought! Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, like you put on your clothes in the morning. Paul writes the same thing to the Galatians in connection with our baptism. "***For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***" (Gal 3:27) In our baptism we were clothed with Christ. He covers us with His righteousness. He is the defense we need against our sinful nature that still desires to get the upper hand. With the advent of our salvation being closer than we first believed, get dressed. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and don't give any thought as to how to gratify your sinful flesh. Put aside those deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. It is time to get dressed!

Christmas isn't too far off. There is much we need to do between now and then. But there is an even more important Day that is coming. The Advent of Our Salvation is very near. Dawn is breaking. Soon the trumpet will sound, the dead will rise, and all believers in Christ will inherit the kingdom God has prepared for us. Let us daily rejoice as a child does on Christmas morning. Let us wake from the slumber of the world. Confessing our sins, daily drowning our old man, and getting dressed with the armor God has given us - His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Even so, come Lord Jesus! AMEN.