

The End Times

c-b-33rd Sunday of OT 2021

In the last few months there have been a few people saying,
the second coming is just around the corner.

You had better get ready.

Usually these statements are accompanied by a whole list of things you better have, as you prepare.

Let me say that these warning are right...but only partially right.

We have had these warning since Jesus' Ascension.

Many of the first century Christians believed that Jesus was coming again in their lifetime.

In the year 999 many believed Jesus would return in the year 1000,

in the year 1999, many believed that Jesus would come again in the year 2000.

After hearing dozens of predictions...all of them wrong...

what are we supposed to believe?

The question itself is nonsensical.

If you knew...without a doubt...that Jesus was coming, in all his glory, tomorrow...
would you do anything different.

If the answer is yes...then what are you doing today?

Should we not be living every day as if it were our last?

If we would do something different tomorrow,

that means we are not living a full Christian life today.

These are the end times, but let me be perfectly clear...

the end times are from the day Jesus Ascended into heaven—
until the day he returns in all his glory.

Every day we wake up is the last day...and our lives should reflect that.

Personally I believe that when Jesus comes again,

the whole universe will be made new, reflecting the line from the book of Revelation,

“The one who was seated on the throne said,

“See, I am making all things new.” (Rev 21:5)

When that happens, the universe will be so transformed that we do not even have words to describe it.

Suffice to say it will be wonderful;

we will be eternally happy, and completely surrounded by love.

In other words we need not be afraid.

This world is all we have...but it is also all we need.

The assurance that all things are in God hands—

that his plan for us and the world will be fulfilled...ought to be enough.

I find it very ironic that on this day when we read about “The End Times.”

We also celebrate the “World Day of the Poor.”

At the same time the “United Nations Climate Change Conference” is just wrapping up.

The question that I have is why are the still poor people in our world,

why do we even need to talk about climate change.

There are lots of resources in our world.

God would not have given us a world to live on,
and not provide all that we need to live on. Why are people in need?

Let me digress for a moment.

In Pope Francis' message for the world day of the poor, he made an interesting comment.
Remember the incident of the women breaking open an alabaster jar and anointing Jesus feet.
It was Judas who said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii
and the money given to the poor?"

John, in his gospel, goes on to note that Judas
said this, "not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief,
and as he had the money box, he used to take what was put in it" (12:5-6).
"Judas appeared to be concerned about the poor—but his actions did not reflect this.
It shows--those who do not respect the poor, betray Jesus' teaching,
and therefore cannot be his disciples.

Fast forward 2000 years, the people of North America,
hold a significant percent of the world's wealth.
If, in our own day, we hold the purse strings of the world, and take out whatever we want,
are we any different than Judas.
If we knew that Jesus was coming tomorrow, would we do anything different to help the poor?
If we knew Jesus was coming next year, would we do anything different to help the poor.
If the answer is yes, if we would do something different tomorrow,
it means we are not living a full Christian life today.

In my reading this week I came across an interesting line,
"The purpose of the Lord's second coming will not to execute judgement,
but to gather his elect."

We can get so caught in in preparing for judgement, warning people, stocking up on supplies
that we forget about the love of God.

Let me say that again in case you missed it.

We can get so caught in in preparing for judgement, warning people, stocking up on supplies
that we forget about the love of God.

Preparing for judgement, warning people stocking up on supplies...
all of these are based on fear...I need to protect myself.

Contrast this to the most common phrase that God speaks to humanity is, "Do not be afraid."
Should I be afraid of his coming...

I should be--if I am doing something wrong...then I will need to protect myself.

But let me say this...

there is nothing you can do to protect yourself against the wrath of God...
except to live a life of love today.

If I am truly trying to live a holy life...

I cannot look forward to his second coming with fear...only hope, joy and love

Our faith gives us the conviction that the world is not heading towards final, irreversible catastrophe.

Nor is it heading towards mere ending.

It is headed towards fulfillment.

By his Easter Victory Jesus has triumphed over sin, evil and death.

We should not be afraid of this victory...we should embrace it.