

Wars, rumors of wars. Jesus tells us, several times, about the world coming to an end. Quite a horrifying picture. The Temple in Jerusalem destroyed, **not one stone left upon another.** Wars, disasters, His people. persecuted, hated, killed. A struggle for living. We heard from Daniel, a time of trouble **such as never has been** before. If you're like me, you hear these things, hope you're not alive when this all takes place.

Well, I've got some bad news. Even though some will try to interpret how close we are to the end, our Lord's words are a picture of the church of all time. Disasters, wars, persecution, hatred, troubles are the lot of the church in an evil, sin-filled world. The church of the cross bears the cross. But I also have some good news.

Actually 2 things that if you believe, are among the most important things you will ever hear in this world, ever hear in your life. 1st Jesus tells us in this end times trouble, the Holy Spirit causes the Gospel preached everywhere. He actually uses the troubles to do so. What satan intends for evil, God uses for good. Always, in this world, in this place, in your days. Always, everything that is evil, wrong, or bad, used for your ultimate good, to bless you, for your Lord's good and gracious will to be done. He always brings a greater good thru suffering, evil; to bless His people. Good beyond your thought or imagination.

2nd Jesus speaks of the end, to comfort you, His promise **the one who endures to the end will be saved.** How do you endure to the end? In the midst of this broken creation, brokenness of life, we have unlimited supernatural resources at hand. We're not alone in this world. Christ is not just up in heaven, planning on coming in the future -He is here for us now. Here with His power, forgiveness, life. Here to help you, strengthen you, to endure to the end. On our own, you would never make it.

So if you are feeling a bit weak, depressed by the news, a bit discouraged, frightened, a bit overwhelmed, repent, for you've been relying on yourself. Repent and receive the life, the forgiveness of your Savior; greater than any power in this world; the life, the forgiveness -here for you, to endure to the end.

How do you endure to the end! That's what makes the Divine Service so Divine. What's happening here is life-changing. What's given here, the only true power and comfort and endurance. The continuing work of Jesus for you, giving you all you need, keeping you. Written today, we **hold fast the confession of Him, He who promised is faithful.** In these last days, we aren't unrealistically optimistic, nor downcast and pessimistic, but

confident. Our Lord endures. Our future guaranteed in baptismal waters, by His Word and Spirit.

How do we endure to the end? **Consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.** We need to bring out the best in each other; to stir each other up; to be blessings to one another. This too comes from our Savior as He stirs you here with His Word; makes you His saints, that you live as you are – baptized children of God in a world of sin and death and workers of good and light in a world of selfishness and darkness

How do we endure to the end? Written today, **we do not neglect to meet together, but encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.** We meet together here because we need to be here, as our Lord command, desires for you. In a place Divine. For a Christian is never just an individual, me and Jesus, thing - but a corporate thing, a body of Christ reality. People need you here. You need others here, your fellow struggling brothers and sisters in Christ. Oh how you need that which only He gives here, God comes to you through Word, through Sacrament, through our common confession, to establish you, encourage you, care for you, sustain you in His forgiveness, His life, **as you see the Day drawing near.** Scripture shows you; your Lord promises you: you have a refuge. A place of shelter from the storms. He is your fortress and trusty shield and weapon. (Someone should put that in a hymn.) A Savior who knows your weakness, here in strength for you.

These end-time things, trials, sufferings, wars, rumors of wars, all must come. Every terrorist attack, disaster, earthquake, hurricane; all hatred and conflict; every bit of vain politics, betraying spouse; every disease, death, danger is but a sign the end is coming. God has not forgotten you. Jesus will return. Is there an increase of these things? Who is sufficient to know? The evil will end, our Lord's return today or 1000 years. It doesn't matter. We live now at the end of time, as the Church has lived since 70 AD when the Jerusalem Temple destroyed. His Word has warned us. Nothing is accidental; we will not be afraid. Jesus lives! Lift up your heads. The end is coming, thanks be to God. Our redemption draws near. Your sorrows, your struggle, your worries, your tears will end. He always brings a greater good through suffering, evil; to bless His people. His love endures forever and in it, you do too, endure to the end. He is coming for you at the end, even comes today. Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly.