

Zephaniah 1:7-16; Psalm 90:1-12; 1 Thess. 5:1-11; Matt. 25:14-30 ESV

Life Is Short, So Don't Be Complacent!

Services: Sunday, 11/19 at 8:00 & 10:45

Church Year: 24th Sun. after Pentecost / 23rd Sun. after Trinity – 2017

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Since each of today's readings have an important message, with each reading I will share a summary from The Lutheran Study Bible, the reading itself, and some very brief comments (which are not included here, but are available on the audio sermon).

OLD TESTAMENT: Zephaniah 1:7-16 ESV – *“God’s day of wrath would come swiftly on the people of Judah because of their materialism, worldliness, and general disobedience. The final Day of Judgment will likewise come unexpectedly, as a thief in the night (1Th 5:2). We have all missed the mark of God’s perfection and deserve only His punishment, now and eternally. However, God so loved the world that He sent His only Son to endure the punishment for our sins. All who believe in Jesus have no need to fear the Day of Judgment” (TLSB).*

⁷ Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice [the nation of Judah] and consecrated his guests [the Babylonians, appointed by God, to consume the sacrifice].

⁸ And on the day of the LORD’s sacrifice—“I will punish the officials and the king’s sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire [who dressed like those in the heathen nations]. ⁹ On that day I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold [which was a superstitious practice], and those who fill their master’s house with violence and fraud.”

¹⁰ “On that day,” declares the LORD, “a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate, a wail from the Second Quarter, a loud crash from the hills. ¹¹ Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar [a place of business]! For all the traders are no more; all who weigh out silver are cut off.

¹² At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, ‘**The LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill.**’

¹³ Their goods shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.”

¹⁴ The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast [so the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC and AD 70 point ahead to Jesus’ return]; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there [thus even brave

warriors will cry out in despair].¹⁵ A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,¹⁶ a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

Brief comments on verse 12...

PSALM 90:1-12 ESV – *“How quickly life flies by: grass withering in the summer heat, leaves falling and blowing away in autumn, trees standing bare in winter. Even more heartbreaking is to stand by a casket and stare at a lifeless body or to look in a mirror and see age steal youth and energy. Yet in spring the flowers bloom and the grass turns green. The grave is empty on Easter morning. Jesus has risen! God has taken pity on us and given us everlasting life in Christ” (TLSB).*

God’s Eternal Nature

P: Lord, you have been our dwelling place

C: in all generations.

P: Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world,

C: from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Brevity of Human Life

L: You return man to dust

C: and say, “Return, O children of man!”

L: For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past,

C: or as a watch in the night.

L: You sweep them away as with a flood;

C: they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning:

L: in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;

C: in the evening it fades and withers.

Human Sinfulness Causes the Dismal State of the Human Race

L: For we are brought to an end by your anger;

C: by your wrath we are dismayed.

L: You have set our iniquities before you,

C: our secret sins in the light of your presence.

L: For all our days pass away under your wrath;

C: we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

L: The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty;

C: yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

Prayer for Wisdom and Grace

L: Who considers the power of your anger,

C: and your wrath according to the fear of you?

L: So teach us to number our days

C: **that we may get a heart of wisdom.**

A: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Brief comments on the brevity of human life and verse 12...

EPISTLE: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 – *“...Paul now proceeds to tell the Thessalonians about the coming Day of Judgment in which the Lord will give His final verdict. Let us walk in holiness and righteousness so that we may not be ashamed when our Lord appears to judge our work. The Lord who has chosen us for salvation and died for us will be on our side on the final Day of Judgment” (TLSB).*

¹ Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day [so we live in the light of God’s Word]. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep [thus live as if we were spiritually dead], as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Brief comments on verses 3 and 9...

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 25:14-30 ESV – *“Our relationship to God and the world is one of stewardship. We are to use everything entrusted to us in such a way that it benefits God’s kingdom. Though modern people often have far more material and technological means than any previous generation, they often use these tools selfishly. An unfulfilling promise attaches to faithful stewardship: if we use the things entrusted to us for God and His purposes, we will be blessed here and in heaven” (TLSB).*

¹⁴ “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents

more.¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them *[even as Jesus is coming to settle accounts with what He has entrusted to us]*.²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.'²¹ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.'²³ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'²⁶ But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Brief comments by Dr. Kretzmann:

- **Vv. 24-25:** "...he brought his one lonely talent, and then tried to make a defense of his inexcusable conduct.... he tried to put the blame upon the master."
- **Vv. 26-27:** "The real trouble with him is laziness, together with lack of appreciation of the chances offered him."
- **Vv. 28-29:** "God has given spiritual gifts to be used in His service... He expects too much from no one.... [Regarding the third man,] He... shows that he is not worthy of the Lord's bounty and cares nothing for [God's] grace."

Let us Pray: Dear LORD, You have made us, saved us, and gifted us; therefore, let us not be complacent, but serious, wise, ready, and faithful! In Jesus' name, we pray!

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