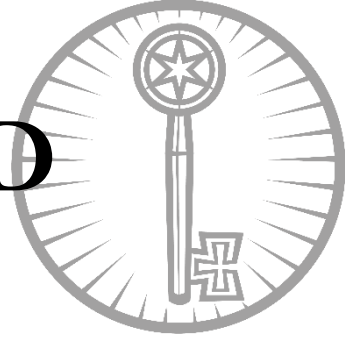


In the HOUSE *of the* LORD

LESSON #11 – HOMEWORK



The Christian Funeral

The earliest Christians viewed death as part of life. The first Christians did not celebrate the birthdays of the martyrs, but rather the date of their deaths. In our Western culture, however, we try to deny the reality of death. But there is no more stark reality of the certainty of death than seeing a casket in the front of the church.

The funeral of a Christian is an opportunity to share the power of the Law, but also the sweetness of the Gospel. It gives comfort to those who are grieving that their Christian loved one has been taken home to heaven through their faith in the death and resurrection of their Savior, Jesus Christ. Lutheran church members are even able to shape the testimony of their funeral service by selecting Scripture readings and hymns. These, along with the sermon, Creed and liturgy of the Christian funeral, are a powerful witness to the resurrection faith of the Christian saint who has now died in the Lord.

There are five themes of the Christian funeral service: 1) sin has brought pain and death into this world; 2) the reality of Christ's physical resurrection; 3) the forgiveness of sins offered to those who believe in Christ; 4) the assurance of the resurrection of the body – some to life everlasting, the others to eternal fire; 5) and the comfort of life everlasting for Christ's believers.

Christian Funeral II

This service is intended for use at the church or funeral home on occasions where only minimal congregational participation may be expected.

M: You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.

Comfort and Encouragement

M: Grace and mercy to you in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior. The Lamb at the center of the throne will be our Shepherd; he will lead us to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

Greeting and Prayer

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: Dear friends, God did not create Adam and Eve to die. But after our first parents sinned, God said that death would come to all people. At a time like this, God speaks to our hearts. He says, "For dust you are and to dust you will return." His Scriptures also tell us that just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death came to all, because all sinned. At this moment we sense deeply the fulfillment of God's words.

But God sent his one and only Son to become the sacrifice for the sins of the world. Christ gave himself freely into death and rose again, that all who look up to him in faith will have eternal life. In this way the

Lord has had compassion on us. “For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” Therefore, death for the Christian is not the end of life but the beginning of eternal joy with Jesus in paradise.

Christ was raised from the dead and became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. Now we know that when he returns “we will not all sleep, but we will be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, let us stand firm in the Lord and always be faithful to him in life and in death. Since all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, may he teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us, “for none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”

Thanks be to God for the comfort of his Word!

M: Let us pray. God of grace and mercy, we give thanks for your loving-kindness to all your servants who, having finished their course in faith, now rest from their labors. Grant that we also may be faithful unto death and receive the crown of eternal life, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Word of God

Lessons

Sermon

Apostles' Creed

Prayer

M: Lord God, our heavenly Father, we turn to you in this hour of sadness. We thank you for having made our loved one your own dear child through faith in Jesus Christ our Savior. In our grief we rejoice that you have guided _____ with your counsel, kept your promises to him, and received him into the mansions of glory. We pray that you will guide us with your wisdom throughout the rest of our earthly lives. Comfort us in our sorrow. Give us your strength that, though we feel weak, we may be strong. Keep us faithful to the end and receive us at last to glory, through the merits of Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

M: The grace of our Lord † Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: Amen.

LORD,
now lettest thou
THY SERVANT
depart in peace, according to
THY WORD

Digging Deeper

Read Psalm 46. What is God's message in Psalm 46 for his people living in these last days?

Read Matthew 24:1-14. Jesus gives His disciples the signs of the End Times. Give specific examples of how you see each of these signs happening in today's world.

- False Christs
- Wars/rumors of wars
- Famines/earthquakes
- Persecution of the church
- Christians falling away from faith
- Deceptive prophets
- Increase in wickedness/decrease of love
- The gospel preached in all the world

When you see these signs happening, of what are they are reminder?

Read Matthew 24:15-25. These verses apply more directly to the destruction of Jerusalem, but they also contain pictures of the Last Judgment. What warning is Jesus giving us with each of these phrases?

- "How dreadful it will be in those days" (v 19) and "There will be great distress" (v 21):
- "But for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened" (v 22):
- "False Christs and false prophets will appear" (v 24):

Read Matthew 24:26-31. To what does Jesus compare His second coming? What signs will appear in the sky?

When Jesus appears, what will His angels be doing?

Read Matthew 24:32-51. What lesson does Jesus want you to learn from the fig tree?

How will the last days be like the days of Noah? (See also Genesis 6:1-13.)

How is Jesus' coming like a thief in the night? What can you do to be prepared?

How can we be good servants of Jesus Christ? What will happen if we are not?

Many modern churches are intent on helping their members live well in the world. What does Matthew 24 teach us about the purpose of God's Church?

Read Matthew 25. What is Jesus teaching in each parable?

- The Ten Virgins: Matthew 25:1-13:
- The Talents: Matthew 25:14-30:
- The Sheep and Goats: Matthew 25: 31-46:

What is the greatest danger in waiting for Christ's return, since we don't know when exactly it will be?

Read 1 Corinthians 15. This is the Great Resurrection chapter of the Bible. What proofs does the apostle Paul give for the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? (v1-9)

Some people in the congregation in Corinth did not believe in the resurrection. What consequences does Paul give if there is no resurrection from the dead?

- V13:
- V14:
- V15:
- V16:
- V17:
- V18:
- V19:

Describe the difference between our bodies here on earth and our resurrected and new bodies in heaven. (v42-44)

This life is difficult – especially for the Christian. What comfort does the resurrection give you for your daily living? (v 58)

Read Revelation 7:9-17. In the earlier verses of Revelation 7, St. John sees a vision of heaven with 144,000 white robed saints before him. This 144,000 is a symbolic number. It represents all of God's saints in heaven – including us. St. John asks one of the elders in heaven who these saints are. What does the elder reply? (v 14)

Who is the Lamb who has washed their robes and who now sits on the throne with the saints around Him?

Verses 15-17 are wonderfully comforting verses. In fact, they are used in the liturgy for Christian Funeral I (from the lesson). How is each phrase comforting for you?

- “They are before the throne of God.”
- “[They] serve him day and night in his temple.”
- “[God] will spread his tent over them.”
- “Never again will they hunger.”
- “Never again will they thirst.”
- “The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.”
- “The Lamb . . . will be their shepherd.”
- “He will lead them to springs of living water.”
- “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

When we finally arrive home in heaven, why will we praise God?

Read Revelation 21-22. The other chapters of Revelation speak of Christ’s final judgment. Chapters 21 and 22, however, lead us beyond the judgment and into the wonderful heaven God’s people will enjoy for eternity. Jesus promised His disciples: “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (John 14:2-3). Give a description of these “rooms” in the New Jerusalem. (Revelation 21)

Read Genesis 2. Compare it with Revelation 22. Find as many similarities as you can between the New Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden.

The angel has been speaking to St. John throughout Revelation. What is the importance of the angel’s last words to John?

What is the importance of Jesus’ last words?

The Holy Spirit and the Bride of Christ (the Christian Church) offer an invitation. What is that invitation? (v17)

What is the final warning of Revelation – and really all of Scripture? (v18-20)

What are John’s last words to all of God’s faithful saints? (v21)

Jesus says that “You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Luke 12:40). In order for you to be ready, it is good for you to do your daily Bible reading:

Daily Bible Reading: Romans 1-16

Memorize the following passage: John 14:2-3 *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going th ere to prepare a place for you.³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

Digging Even Deeper

The Lutheran Confessions are a clear explanation and defense of the doctrines of Scripture. Here is what the Augsburg Confession and the Defense of the Augsburg Confession have to say about Christ’s return to judgment:

Augsburg Confession: Article XVII: Of Christ's Return to Judgment.

1] Also they teach that at the Consummation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and 2] will raise up all the dead; He will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, 3] but ungodly men and the devils He will condemn to be tormented without end.

The Defense of the Augsburg Confession: Article XVII: Of Christ's Return to Judgment.

66] The Seventeenth Article the adversaries receive without exception, in which we confess that at the consummation of the world Christ shall appear, and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give to the godly eternal life and, eternal joys, but shall condemn the ungodly to be punished with the devil without end.

