

Pentecost 26 – November 18, 2018

Text: Daniel 12:1-3

Theme: SPOILER ALERT!

**I generally am not a fan of the fact that modern technology exists and makes our world and our lives more stressful than they need to be. For you millennials and z'ers, there was a time when we didn't know that you had a horrendous attack of gastritis until you either called us on the phone or we actually saw you face to face. Now you are kind enough to text, tweet, Instagram and Facebook it to me, sometimes with confirming photographs, at the moment it is happening. There are times I am not a fan of modern technology.**

**I specifically loathe the internet. One of the times I most loath it is when I am really into a show on TV and someone who is binge watching on Netflix or Hulu blabs to me on Facebook about what is going to happen in the upcoming episodes. It drives me even more nuts when they're wrong because then I watch the whole series with false expectations! With regard to our texts today about the end of the world, my point is this. If you listen to idiotic, untrained, self-aggrandizing TV preachers tell you about the end times, you're going to be disappointed because they're wrong. So today, I'm going to tell you what is really going to happen at the end of the world, so SPOILER ALERT! If you don't want to know what is really going to happen at the end of the world, put your headphones in and watch Netflix for about 15 minutes. Your neighbor will nudge you when it's time to stand up again.**

**The book of Daniel tells us what the end of the world is going to be like. Ready? Things are going to get bad, really bad. I always giggle inside when people who are sitting in their nice comfy chair, in their nice comfy houses, look at me and say,**

**“Pastor, with all the horrible things in the world, don’t you think the end will be soon?” What horrible things are going on for you? Your cable was down yesterday for a whole hour and you missed two complete episodes of “Diners, Drive-ins and Dives”? Jewell was out of your name brand chips so you had to buy the store brand? Even those of us working through truly challenging situations don’t have any idea of how horrible horrible can really be. You and I have not, are not and will never experience truly horrible. God promises us through Daniel,**

**“And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.”**  
**But we will be delivered. God promises that we are delivered from the horrible times so you can assume that if you have faith in Christ and are still here with us, the horrible times have not yet started. Sorry to ruin it for everyone who likes to predict the end of the world every time a reactor melts down or a tsunami swallows up a bunch of people. Jesus is pretty specific about knowing when the end is coming.**

**“See that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but**

**the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.”**

**Do not be alarmed when things seem to be going down the drain. That’s what is supposed to happen. That’s what has always been happening. You have one thing and one thing only to focus on: Jesus. You keep your eyes on Jesus and proclaim him to everyone you encounter both with your words and your actions.**

**This is why we have worship with Holy Communion every Sunday along with Bible Studies. This is why we have Sunday School for the kids and confirmation and VBS and Camp Chaos and BIG HOUSE. This is why we are not busily stocking Founder’s Hall with provisions to survive Armageddon because we don’t care. Bad things will happen and either we will survive or not, but that’s God’s worry not ours. Keeping our faith well fed and strong; that’s our concern. Using the gifts God has given us to help and serve others, that’s our calling, our vocation.**

**Whatever happens, live or die, you are protected by the Host of Heaven and the eternal place that Christ has arranged for you awaits your arrival. So we don’t concern ourselves with the end of the world. What we are concerned about is the end of unbelievers because as long as we have breath, we have a chance to proclaim salvation to them and the Holy Spirit has the opportunity to create faith in them. Start with your children and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, nephews and**

**nieces, neighbors and friends, and move out from there. You are empowered by the very body and blood of Jesus Christ and you have been given God's Word so you have all the tools you need. It's not up to you to convert anyone, but it is up to you to scatter the seed of God's Word with what you say and even more importantly, what you do. That is what we mean by the word vocation. Vocation is a calling and we all have the same general calling; to serve our neighbor and in service to him proclaim the love of Christ. That will look differently depending on the gifts and abilities you have but the calling is the same and we know what our unbelieving neighbors are facing if they are not made believers by the Holy Spirit.**

**You need tools for seeding your garden. We have study Bibles and catechisms in the office for you to have if you need one, or for you to give to people who need them. If you can afford to pay for them, that's great but if you can't, that's fine too. We also have many opportunities for you to invite people who do not know the Lord or more likely, know him but have become disconnected from him. Never stop inviting them and praying for them and showing them the love of Jesus because as Daniel makes clear and as Jesus makes clear in our readings for today, the end will come. The end is definitely coming either when Jesus returns or when you die and when that day comes, we want everyone we know from our family to the person who drives our children's bus to the person who is elected to govern our village, to avoid the truly horrible and to enter into eternal paradise.**