

Sermon 2010 Advent Midweek 3  
Text: Luke 21:25-36  
Theme: "He Will Return"  
December 15, 2010

You may remember this scene from the movie *The Terminator*. It's a late night in a quiet and calm police station. A large man walks in the front door wearing a leather coat and leather pants. He looks tough. He looks menacing. He glances around the station. The sergeant at the desk asks him what he wants. He's greeted with silence. The visitor glances around again and says, "I'll be back." Soon the police station is filled with mayhem and destruction as Arnold Schwarzenegger returns by smashing through the front of the station in an automobile.

When the Bible speaks of Jesus' return, it sounds a little like this scene from *The Terminator*. For some, the second coming will be a time of mayhem, terror. St. Luke tells us in our text, "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

When Jesus comes back, the judge of all mankind returns, and no one will escape his judgment. Judgment comes because of humanity's sin. Luke tells us, "Watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth."

That trap spoken of is literally a trap to catch and destroy animals. Whether or not most people take sin seriously, God does. Luke tells us, "But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." Today we see sin covered up and even renamed to make it seem less evil than it is. We don't gossip about people, we only express our concern to half the neighborhood. We don't sleep around; we "express our sexual freedom." People are not perverted; they practice an "alternate lifestyle."

And lest we simply point fingers at others, what about us, the rock solid Wednesday night attending believers? Are we awake and vigilant and living our lives like we believe he will be back – maybe even by the end of this service? Or do we easily slip into a routine where we go to church just because it's the right thing to do? I used to have a member in Seattle who came to church every Sunday because that's what good Christians do! But all fall and winter he had an earpiece in his ear and was listening to the Seahawks game. Did he really believe Jesus was coming back?

And what about worry? Why do we, the faithful, devote so much energy to worry if we really believe that Jesus is coming back? Whatever trial comes your way, you might pray from strength to endure it but why worry about it? We are on the same path to glory no matter what happens on this earth!

The trap for unbelievers might be one thing but our trap is another. Our trap is more insidious because it is not as obvious and we can look pious and holy while sitting in it. Look at me! A wonderful pious Christian who is in church every week judging everyone and worrying himself sick over what everyone else is not doing, and hating life because I have no joy and no peace. That is not the way God intended for us to live this life.

We live this life with joy because while there will be mayhem and madness for those who reject Christ, for us it will not be like the Terminator but like the old westerns when the cavalry came riding in to save the cowboys. It will be a blessed time for those who trust in Jesus. Luke tells us, "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." And how do we wait? "When these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near"

We don't wait lazy and pompous as though nothing of particular importance is happening. We don't wait scared and trembling as though we don't know what will happen to us. We wait as pardoned criminals. We have the Governor's pardon in our hands and we are simply waiting for the paper work to be completed and try to avoid anything too unpleasant while we wait. We are not "dead-men walking." We are pardoned sinners and we are on our way to freedom. Our deliverer is returning for us. We lift up our heads and watch for his arrival.