

First Sunday of Advent – December 1, 2019

Isaiah 2: 1-5 Romans 13: 11-14 Matthew 24: 37-44

Events can occur in our lives, as well as in our world, that are greatly upsetting. For any one of us it can be something like a catastrophic illness, an unexpected death, or even the simple demands of everyday life. In our world, it can be a natural disaster or man-made terror and war.

Yet, no matter what tragedy or difficulty we might encounter, for people of faith, those who believe in God and in Jesus Christ, there is one constant, an anchor, a solid foundation, on which we rest. Put in another way, through all of the challenges of simply being alive, there is a common and constant strength that we possess. It is the trust and the hope that we profess in God, and in the love of God for us. As a result, the purpose of the creation of which we are a part, and the purpose of our lives, accompanied by the love of God that they reflect, will be accomplished. It will be achieved. It will be fulfilled.

This is the vision and the hope which the Season of Advent proclaims. This is the vision and the hope that is found in the beautiful words of Isaiah the prophet that we heard today. This is the vision and the hope that encourages us as we begin again the annual cycle of reflections and celebrations that are a part of our preparation for the recalling of the coming of God into the world in the person of Jesus Christ at Christmas.

We are to hear the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew that was read today not as something which brings on fear. Certainly, it is not a threat. It is a simple counsel given to us that advises us and gives us encouragement. We are to be alert, attentive, to everything around us. In ways that might be totally unexpected, the presence of God is revealed.

We are to live, as St. Paul tells us, not just for the moment, but also with the view of what will be. The love of God and the purpose of God will be accomplished. It will be fulfilled. We are to live so as to be part of this. Even in the darkest moments of our lives and of our own human history, the light of God, the light of Christ can and will break forth. It is firm faith and trust in this that motivates us as believers in Jesus Christ.

Of the many gifts that we might present to others at this time of the year, let it be the faith and trust in God that we can share. Let it be the faith and trust in God that, most of all, we are to celebrate.

In the belief and the practice we proclaim, even as simply as by our presence here today, what is to guide us in the choices we make and in the lives we live is the faith, the hope, the trust that this Season recalls. It is the faith, the hope, the trust in the presence with us, then, now, and in the future of our good and gracious God.